



Centre for Effective Services

Annual Review 2014

*Connecting research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for communities,
children and young people across the island of Ireland.*

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About the Centre for Effective Services

The Centre for Effective Services connects research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for children, young people and communities across the island of Ireland.

The Mission Statement of CES outlines five objectives which inform our work. These are to:

- Influence policy and systemic change
- Champion innovative service design and implementation
- Build knowledge, skills and capacity
- Promote partnerships and collaborations
- Develop CES organisational effectiveness

CES was originally established in 2008 as a company limited by guarantee with charity status in Ireland. CES is an all island organisation, with offices in Dublin and Belfast.

Welcome from the Chair

Dan Flinter, CES Chair

This Review reflects the main developments for CES in 2014, a selection of our project work during the year, and some of the themes emerging.

Over the past year, CES continued to make connections across the fields of research, policy and practice. Collaboration and partnerships have been vital elements of that work. CES worked closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the development of *'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020.'* This was a unique opportunity for CES to contribute to a policy framework involving a range of departments focused on improving outcomes for children and young people. CES also established important partnerships with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and the HSE, and agreed areas of work where CES can assist to implement a number of significant programmes of change.

2014 represents an important milestone in the history of CES, marking ten years of investment in prevention and early intervention initiatives in Ireland. This investment by the Atlantic Philanthropies together with government and other organisations, has seen CES play a key role in supporting and working alongside organisations involved in the initiative to draw on evidence and implement a variety of programmes to improve outcomes for children across the island of Ireland. *'Capturing the Learning'* from this investment is a challenging but critical final phase of this work. In 2014 CES launched the publication *'Ten Years of Learning'*, which summarises the findings of evaluations conducted to date, and proposes a series of key messages which are consistent with rigorous research conducted internationally. Two events were held in Belfast and Dublin to present the findings and encourage engagement with policy makers on their potential to inform the future design and delivery of services for children and young people in both jurisdictions.

The sustainability of CES continues to be a priority for the Board of Directors. Key developments which helped to address that challenge in 2014 included greater diversity and expansion of our funding base and the establishment of an Associates network, which allows

the organisation to draw on expertise and skills in a flexible and cost effective way. The development of the organisations profile in Northern Ireland strengthens the position and perspective of CES as an all island organisation. The organisation will continue to build on this infrastructure in the coming years.

The Board would like to acknowledge our funders for their commitment and support of our work. We look forward to our continued collaboration over the coming year.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director, the CES staff team and my colleagues on the Board for their contribution to CES during the year.

2014 – A year of partnership and collaboration

During 2014, CES was successful in influencing and building awareness of our work, promoting partnerships and collaborations and successfully bidding for paid work in Ireland and Northern Ireland. These developments are critical to the overall sustainability of the organisation. We strengthened our existing relationships with government departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and established new, strategically important relationships with national agencies and organisations, where we can contribute our knowledge of evidence and implementation to bring about better outcomes for communities, children and young people.

Early in 2014 CES provided support to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in the development of 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' – the national policy framework for children and young people 2014 – 2020. The framework was launched in April 2014 and identifies five national outcomes for children and young people, defines policy areas which have the potential to improve these outcomes and establishes new cross government structures to support implementation and monitoring. Following the launch of *'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures'* CES was asked by the Department to provide support for the development and implementation of the National Youth Strategy. The strategy will focus on the needs of young people from 10 to 24 years of age, and will build on the commitments within *'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures'*. Throughout 2014 CES worked closely with DCYA and other stakeholders on the development of both the strategy and an ambitious consultation process by participating on both the Strategy Task Group and the DCYA Project Team. The Strategy will be launched in 2015. CES was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to conduct an exploratory study on children's budgeting. The term children's budgeting has been used to describe the work involved with planning, collecting and tracking expenditure on services aimed at children and young people. The findings were launched at a seminar in Stormont Buildings in March 2014.

In June CES was successful in a submission to act as an implementation partner with the HSE Mental Health Division, in the establishment of a central Programme Management Office to design and oversee the implementation of the national change programme *'A Vision for Change'*. This is an exciting opportunity for CES to help strengthen implementation and programme management skills and capabilities with the Mental Health Division and services. The Programme Management Office will also provide technical and programme management support to individual programmes, projects and local teams around the country. Planning and development work for this challenging initiative took place throughout 2014, and the project will continue until 2017.

In 2014 CES also agreed a new and ambitious programme of work 'The Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative' with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. The Programme will support the work of the Agency in a number of key areas. These include the development and implementation of a Professional Development Plan for Social Work in Tusla, and the development and implementation of a Therapeutic Intervention Toolkit for Social Workers and Social Care Workers. Two working groups have been established to support both strands of the project, which will continue through 2015 and into 2016.

In Northern Ireland we are working with the Early Intervention Transformation Programme, a change programme which was introduced by the government to implement prevention and early intervention approaches for children, young people and their families. CES provides

implementation support and technical assistance to this ambitious programme which involves six Government Departments in together with philanthropic support. CES maintained strong connections with the Department of Health, through our involvement with the Healthy Ireland Cross Sectoral Group which supports the implementation of Healthy Ireland, the national framework to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Ireland. We also worked with the Katherine Howard Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies in the development of a new initiative to support systems change in infant health and wellbeing services through building the capacity of providers. Our work with the Katherine Howard Foundation helped to develop a logic model for the new initiative and a grant proposal to support the work which was successful at the end of 2014. CES will provide technical assistance and implementation support to the initiative, which will involve several elements including public information and education, human capital development, tools and resources and the implementation of an integrated service delivery model. We continued to develop our partnership with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) with grant holders on the Big Lottery Impact of Alcohol Programme, where our role involves supporting collaboration, promoting the use of evidence and helping grant holders to evaluate their work.

Finally, we enhanced our work in the education sector during the year. In Northern Ireland, CES was commissioned to review best practice to inform the development of Sure Start services, a government initiative which aims to give children the best start in life, by helping to support their learning, health and wellbeing. Collaborative work with the Teaching Council and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment focused on how teachers engage with evidence. CES was invited to make presentations at the Annual Conference of the Joint Managerial Board in September, and at the Féilte Conference marking World Teachers Day in October.

Key themes from our work in 2014

Three key themes emerged strongly from our work in 2014:

Capturing the Learning from investment in Prevention and Early Intervention

2014 saw the culmination of CES work in the area of prevention and early intervention through the publication of 'Ten Years of Learning' – a report outlining the key messages emerging from ten years of investment in prevention and early intervention initiatives throughout the island of Ireland. The publication builds on the findings from evaluations of programmes which received targeted investment from government together with the Atlantic Philanthropies over a ten year period.

The report communicates key messages about prevention and early intervention from that investment, which are consistent with international evidence and which are highly relevant to policy makers and service commissioners. Key messages and learning from the Programme is timely and has the potential to inform both programmes and policy. Experience and learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme was used to inform the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. CES is also helping to inject learning from the Programme into the design, planning and evaluation of the Area Based Childhood Programme. Learning also has the potential to inform the development of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme in Northern Ireland.

Building knowledge and expertise in implementation

CES strengthened knowledge and experience in the field of implementation. In 2014 we participated actively in the Global Implementation Initiative which promotes collaborative approaches to implementation science, practice and policy at an international level.

2014 was a busy year for CES in preparing as a local partner to host the Global Implementation Conference which takes place in 2015, and in developing the European Implementation Collaborative, a European wide initiative to share experience of, and strengthen expertise in implementation. CES is playing a leading role in the establishment of the European Implementation Collaborative which is to be launched along with an interactive website in 2015 as part of the Global Implementation Conference.

Closer to home, CES continued to lead the all Island Implementation Network, with two meetings of the network taking place in 2014. Implementation Network meetings allow policy makers and service managers north and south to share experience of their implementation work and to learn from the challenges faced by other sectors and areas. CES was also delighted to collaborate with Trinity College Dublin in the development of the first Postgraduate Certificate in Implementation Science. The first group of seven students to sign up for the programme come from diverse backgrounds which include health, children's services and business. The course provides students with knowledge about the theory and practice of implementation which they can apply to their work. At a practical level, CES was able to contribute our knowledge and experience of both implementation concepts and practice.

Making connections across the system

In 2014 the work of CES continued to extend into other complementary policy areas. While CES worked closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, our reach also extended into the sectors of health, education, mental health, drugs and alcohol. New relationships were forged and strengthened with national agencies and statutory bodies in health and mental health. This development is in keeping with CES strategy to support systems change. If we are to meet the challenges of delivering better outcomes for children and communities, then we must work across a range of agencies and government departments. In late 2014 we undertook a review of the literature both in Ireland and internationally about the experience of ‘whole of government work’, to understand the challenges of this approach, to learn from international experience and from the study of implementation. Findings of this review, along with practical resources for policy makers undertaking this work will be published in 2015.

Highlights of our work in 2014

A multidisciplinary staff team based at our offices in Dublin and Belfast worked on a variety of projects in 2014. The following are highlights of some of the projects we worked on in 2014.

‘Promoting the importance of evidence in decision making for children and young people’

CES delivered two professional development courses to social work professionals and managers in Northern Ireland to build their capacity to use evidence in their decision making. The **Evidence to Outcomes** course was piloted with the Western Health and Social Care Trust, and aimed at social work practitioners. The **Evidence Informed Decision Making** course was piloted with all Trusts and aimed at Chairs of Child Protection Case Conferences and looked-after children reviews across Northern Ireland. This work was supported under the Northern Ireland Social Work Strategy and developed in Partnership with the Northern Ireland Children’s Services Improvement Board.

In addition to professional development opportunities, CES also produced two Evidence Reviews for the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland. The first evidence review summarised published literature on the models of therapeutic approaches to managing physical child aggression in Residential Childcare Settings, and the implications of the findings for policy and practice in Northern Ireland. The second review looked at Coaching and Mentoring and will be used to inform the strategy for professional development for social workers in Northern Ireland. This review was launched at the Social Work Strategy Leadership Conference in November.

Read ‘Coaching and Mentoring in Social Work – A Review of the Evidence’ commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board to support *improving and Safeguarding Social Care Wellbeing, a 10 year Strategy for Social Work* [here](#)

‘Increasing the number of Children and Young People’s Services Committees and supporting their implementation’

CES continued to provide strategic and operational support to both DCYA and Children and Young Peoples Services Committees through a National Co-ordinator and Project Support based at our Dublin office as well as input from the wider CES team. A new development in national policy in 2014 saw the remit of the committees expanded from their original role as Children’s Services Committees to Children and Young Peoples Services Committees. The age profile was broadened to target young people up to 24 years of age. Participation and engagement with CYPSCs continued in communities around Ireland, and the number of committees increased from 16 Children’s Services Committees at the end of 2013, to 21 Children and Young People’s Services Committees at the end of 2014. Coverage now reaches 22 counties and 25 local authority areas.

CES played an important role in helping CYPSCs to relate their work to a national policy context, and in supporting and providing opportunities for individual committees to share knowledge and experience of their development. Three meetings of CYPSC co-ordinators were organised by CES in 2014 to provide this support.

CES also helped the initiative to engage with key stakeholders. In line with ‘Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures’, CYPSCs aim to model interagency working. During 2014, engagement with the Irish Primary Principals Network and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals brought about greater representation from the education sector. The Irish Primary Principals Network is now represented on all 21 committees, while participation from the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals continues to grow.

In 2015 CES aims to help CYPSCs in having full coverage in Ireland, and to launch a website which promotes the individual work of CYPSCs as well as their collective identity.

To read more about CES work in supporting implementation of Children and Young Peoples Services Committees, click [here](#).

‘Harvesting the Knowledge from ten years of investment in Prevention and Early Intervention in Ireland’

For more than a decade the Atlantic Philanthropies, sometimes together with Government and other organisations made a significant investment in prevention and early intervention services and programmes across the island of Ireland. In 2014 CES published ‘Ten Years of Learning’, a report which summarised the learning emerging from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative. The report draws on data from six outcome reports based on findings from available evaluations. The reports in the series cover the themes of Parenting, Child Behaviour, Children’s Learning, Child Health and Development, Promoting Inclusion and Organisational Learning. ‘Ten Years of Learning’ extracts eight key messages emerging from the data and proposes thirteen recommendations for policy and practice.

The report was launched in Dublin at St Andrews Resource Centre in October by Minister for Children and Youth Affairs James Reilly, and in Belfast in November by Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Jim Wells at the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts. Over 200 people attended both events. A panel of senior policy makers which included Stephanie O’Keefe, (Health and Wellbeing, Health Services Executive) Seán Ó’Foghlú (Department of

Education and Skills) and Elizabeth Canavan, (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) responded to the findings in Dublin. In Belfast, panel members included Katrina Godfrey (Department of Education and Learning), Sean Holland (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety) and Orlaigh McGibbon (Youth Justice Agency).

Read the report [here](#)

‘Publishing a new resource to help youth workers apply theory to practice’

In 2014 CES launched new resources for youth workers – ‘Ideas in Action in Youth Work’. The resources were developed to respond to the needs of youth workers who expressed a challenge in applying the theory of youth work to the practical, real world situations they come across. Ideas in Action in Youth Work includes two resources, both of which complement the National Standards Quality Framework for Youth Work. ‘In Theory’ reviews seventeen different theorists in youth work, while ‘In Practice’ includes activities, toolkits and topics to kick start discussions. The work was informed by a working group led by the City of Dublin Youth Service Board.

CES also collaborated with Youth Work Ireland and the City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB) to promote the resource and help youth workers to use it. Three workshops were held around the country, with 130 people involved in youth work participating.

To download ‘Ideas in Action in Youth Work, click [here](#).

‘Supporting the implementation of the Area Based Childhood Programme’

The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in thirteen areas of disadvantage around Ireland. The Programme aims to break the cycle of child poverty through integrated and effective services and interventions focused on child development and wellbeing, parenting and educational disadvantage. CES is jointly managing the ABC Programme together with Pobal. The role of CES is to provide implementation support for each of the thirteen areas, and to design and implement an evaluation framework for the Programme.

During 2014 we supported each of the thirteen areas to help them develop plans for their area with clear objectives and a strong evidence base. CES also provided the Areas with opportunities to increase their understanding of implementation. A series of four workshops were held to build on existing knowledge and experience of implementation, explore understanding of the stages and enablers of implementation, to assess implementation readiness within the different areas and to identify actions.

CES organised two ABC ‘Learning Community’ Events in 2014 to help the thirteen areas share their experience of the programme. In July a Learning Community event featured Dr Allison Metz from the National Implementation Research Network in the US. CDI Tallaght, youngballymun and Preparing for Life also shared their experience of implementation from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme. A second event in November focused on evaluation and sharing logic models from all thirteen areas. Oral language development is a theme across the ABC areas and CES commissioned a review to inform the development of oral language services in the ABC Programme areas. Findings from the review were presented at the Learning Community event in November and the report will be published in 2015.

In July 2014 CES designed a framework for evaluation of the Programme. This framework was approved by the ABC Expert Advisory Group and Programme Funders.

For more information about the Area Based Childhood Programme click [here](#).

‘Providing technical assistance to the Early Intervention Transformation Programme’

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme is the outcome of a collaboration involving six Government Departments in Northern Ireland, together with philanthropy. This collaboration involves partners jointly funding a programme of early intervention under *Delivering Social Change*, a policy framework which co-ordinates key actions across Government Departments in Northern Ireland. The Early Intervention Transformation Programme is led by the Department of Health and includes a number of different projects grouped in three work streams. *Work Stream 1* involves equipping parents with the skills to give their child the best start in life, *Work Stream 2* involves supporting families locally when problems arise at an early stage, and *Work Stream 3* involves changing outcomes for children facing particular adversity. CES was engaged to provide technical support for the Programme across all three work streams.

CES role involves providing implementation support and making sure that projects have access to robust evidence in their work. During 2014 CES supported the development of new approaches to the delivery of the universal health visiting and midwifery service. CES also assisted with a needs assessment and analysis of workforce engagement together with the Public Health Agency. We completed a review of evidence based parenting programmes to support commissioners in the Public Health Agency and our work will continue with a cross departmental team to explore approaches to embed prevention and early intervention skills, competences and knowledge within children’s services.

To read more about this project click [here](#)

Extending our reach online and offline

The CES website continued to attract a strong following during 2014. There was a total of 23,823 visitors to the CES website during the year, viewing 71,140 pages. The numbers of visitors increased by 16% from 2013 and 61% of those using our website were new visitors. The most visited pages were Careers, About Us, CES Publications and Current Projects. Popular resources regularly downloaded from the CES website included the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work, an Introductory Guide to Implementation and Ten Years of Learning – Prevention and Early Intervention in Children’s Services.

Following a review in early 2014, we redesigned the content and format of our quarterly Ezine. Three Ezines were issued in 2014, with both open rates and click through rates responding well to the new format. CES also developed its social media profile and increased its following on both Twitter and LinkedIn. A number of staff took part in training so that we can take advantage of the opportunities presented by social media to communicate our work and make valuable connections.

A significant number of external engagements raised the profile of CES. During 2014 CES was asked to present at a number of key events, these included The Social Work Strategy Leadership Conference in Northern Ireland, a Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

event on commissioning, the Limerick Youth Services Annual Conference and a conference on 'Improvements of the wellbeing of children and youth and the prevention of social exclusion' in Tallinn, Estonia.

Other project work in 2014

CES responded to a number of support requests from organisations during 2014. These included requests for logic modelling workshops and programme evaluations. A number of publications and resources were also developed as part of our project work during the year. For further information about our current work, our publications and projects visit www.effectiveservices.org

The CES Board of Directors

Board members of CES contribute in a voluntary capacity, and play a strategic leadership role to ensure that the organisation delivers on its strategy.

In 2014 CES welcomed Trevor Spratt (Trinity College Dublin), Patricia Byron (Director General in the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland) and Paula Kilbane (Fellow of both the Faculty of Public Health Medicine and The Royal College of Physicians) to the Board.

CES Financial Statements

Financial Statements for the year ending December 31st 2014 are available on the CES website www.effectiveservices.org.

The CES Staff Team

In 2014, the staff team worked closely with a network of associates to deliver on the CES workplan. Three staff members are based in Belfast, while twelve staff members work from our Dublin office.

The CES staff team is led by Director Nuala Doherty. Majella McCloskey is Senior Manager of the CES Belfast office, while Katie Burke is Senior Manager in Dublin. Project Specialists in Northern Ireland in 2014 included Helga Sneddon and Michelle Harris. Project Specialists based in Dublin included Dr John Bamber, Dr Stella Owens, Sarah Rochford and Aisling Sheehan. The Business and Resources Team at CES in 2014 included Danyanne Quemper, Hazel Arthur, Liza Clancy, Kimberley Kendall and Breda Ryan. Colma Nic Lughadha is the National Co-ordinator for Children and Young Peoples Services Committees.

CES would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Danyanne Quemper, who left the organisation in 2014.

In 2014 CES welcomed new staff members Claire Hickey and Niamh Farren, both as Project Specialists.

The Graduate Internship Programme continued in 2014, with five graduate interns working in our offices in Belfast and Dublin.

Interns (Left in 2014)

- Niamh Ann Cross
- Ellen Garvey
- Lisa Ann Kennedy
- Martina O'Brien
- Joanne Walker

Interns (Joined in 2014)

- Cathy Brolly
- Fionnuala Doherty
- Sandra McCullagh
- Eva Maria Mills
- Meg Stapleton

CES would like to acknowledge support from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and the Atlantic Philanthropies in 2014.