

Centre for Effective Services

Connecting science, policy and practice to improve outcomes for children and communities

**Presentation to the
PLANET Networking meeting**

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Introduction to the Centre for Effective Services

- **Planning began in 2007, by an international expert group**
- **Initially, an initiative of the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth, later joined by Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs**
 - Arose out of partnership established to develop the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) – a series of high quality, evidence-based child and family services in areas of high need
 - Projects established and evaluations planned, but perceived need to provide assistance to service in implementing evidence-based services

The aim of the Centre for Effective Services

**to increase the success of services in
improving the lives of children and
communities**

...by connecting the **design and the **delivery** of
services with **scientific** and **technical**
knowledge of ‘what works’**

- **An internationally unique and ground-breaking initiative, for which no blueprint exists**

Resources for the Centre

- **A small, multi-disciplinary specialist staff team with backgrounds in:**
 - ◊ **Practice in community-based human services**
 - ◊ **Research sciences** (Prevention Science, Applied Developmental Sciences, Public Health)
 - ◊ **Community and local development and social inclusion**
 - ◊ **Organisational development and management**
 - ◊ **Knowledge transfer and communications**
- **Host visiting scholars, policy makers and practice experts from around the world**
- **Two office bases: Dublin and Belfast**

Aims for the Centre

- 1. Put those commissioning and delivering services in touch with the latest scientific and practice evidence on ‘what works’ (service design)**
- 2. Provide specialist advice and information on ‘how to...’ (delivery and implementation issues)**
- 3. Work in partnership with services to catalyse existing expertise**
- 4. Broker access to external and international expertise**
- 5. Be a ‘critical friend’ to policy makers and practitioners seeking to improve the outcomes of their work**
- 6. Facilitate networks and ‘communities of interest’ in practice and research**
- 7. Be a ‘resource hub’ for the sector**
- 8. Learn in partnership, and help disseminate that learning**
- 9. Work across the whole of Ireland**

Overview of the Practice Development work



Progress so far

- **Operational for last six months** (now with 4 staff)
- **Preparation for scaling up in 2010**
 - building the infrastructure in ROI and NI (offices, systems, governance)
 - recruiting staff
- **Scoping and familiarisation**
 - assessing the needs and clarifying 'our patch' (add value, not duplicate)
 - setting priorities
 - ensuring we fully understand the field and the multiple moving parts
 - building relationships with national and international peers
- **Development of working models and practices**
 - developing the resources; crafting the tools we will use in our daily work

The work with D.CRAGA (2009-2010) – aims to:

- **Put resources of CES at disposal of LDSIP and CDP**
- **Build on work already done**
- **Work in partnership with stakeholders (policy and practice) at all levels**
- **Transfer learning to stakeholders**
- **Contribute to stakeholder networking and sharing of practice insights**
- **Build capacity for ongoing development and refinement**
- **Do it fast!**

The work with D.CRAGA – stages of the work

- 1. Review the current structure, design and operation of the LDSIP/CDP**
- 2. Benchmark against international evidence of best practice**
- 3. Identify current strengths**
- 4. Identify areas of potential improvement**
- 5. Map out implementation issues (feasibility, capacity, resourcing etc)**
- / Support those responsible for implementation with ongoing advice on practice challenges**
- / Assist with planning for rigorous evaluation of the Programme outcomes**

How will we do it?

1. Review the current structure, design and operation of the Programmes

- recent work by expert consultant from New Zealand Ministry of Social Development
- recent 'Value for Money' review of LDSIP
- various other reviews, evaluations and assessments by external and internal bodies
- ask for your help

2. Benchmark against international evidence of best practice

- conduct a rapid review of the international scientific and practice literature on effective practice in community development, local development and social inclusion work

How will we do it?

2. Identify current strengths , and

4. Identify areas of potential improvement

- compare what is currently happening in the Programmes with what has been shown to work, and make suggestions for design refinements

5. Map out implementation issues (feasibility, capacity, resourcing etc)

- seek stakeholder responses

How will we do it?

- 1. Support those responsible for implementation with ongoing evidence-informed advice on practice challenges**
 - draw on internal and external expertise
 - cross-learning from other fields

- 3. Assist with planning for rigorous evaluation of the programme outcomes**
 - as required, assist with planning (design, identification of appropriate methods and instruments) for rigorous evaluation of outcomes
 - if required, help identify expert resources to carry out evaluation

Some challenges....

- **Complexity and diversity of the Programmes**
- **Balancing Important Detail with the Big Picture**
- **Changing policy environment and priorities**
- **Resource constraints/demands on local partnerships and services**
- **Limited time to conduct the review**
- **CES still in development**

We will need your help!