Challenges of Interagency Working

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National Workshop for Prevention Partnership and Family Support

16th November 2016
Today’s presentation

• Introduction to CYPSC

• Defining what we are talking about – Terminology & Typology

• Challenges to interagency working – from research

• Challenges of interagency working – from practice

• Challenging self - What does effective look like?
Local **interagency** structures to **improve outcomes** for children & young people

- Committees are responsible for **improving the lives of children, young people and families** throughout the county at local and community level
- **Age remit:** 0 – 24 years
- Bring together a diverse group of public and not-for-profit organisations in **local county areas**
- Engage in **joint planning and co-ordination of services** for children and young people
- First four Committees established in **2007**; currently 23 committees in 23 counties or 27 local authority areas – at 88% coverage.
- **National roll out ongoing - all counties in Ireland will have a CYPSC**
Connectivity between CYPSC and TUSLA PPFS

TUSLA
- Area Manager
  - Senior Manager for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support
  - Child and Family Support Networks Co-ordinator

CYPSC
- National CYPSC Steering Group
- Individual County / Area CYPSC
  - CYPSC Chairperson
  - CYPSC Sub Group
    - Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Steering Committee
      - Child and Family Support Network
      - Child and Family Support Network
      - Child and Family Support Network

Office of TUSLA COO

National Co-ordinator CYPSC

CYPSC Co-ordinator

Meitheal
Defining interagency working

“more than one agency working together in a planned and formal way rather than simply through informal networking (although the latter may support and develop the former). This can be at the strategic or the operational level.”

(Warmington et al, 2004)
Some typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five levels of Partnership</th>
<th>Five levels of Collaborative Endeavours</th>
<th>Levels of Partnership Working</th>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Co-operation</td>
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<td>Co-operation or Alliance</td>
<td>Co-operation</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-ordination or partnership</td>
<td>Co-ordination</td>
<td>Co-ordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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Levels of Partnership Working

starting with the least joined up:

**Co-operation:** services work together toward consistent goals and complementary services, while maintaining their independence

**Collaboration:** services plan together and address issues of overlap, duplication and gaps in service provision towards common outcomes

**Co-ordination:** services work together in a planned and systematic manner towards shared and agreed goals

**Integration:** different services become one organisation in order to enhance service delivery

*Professionalism, partnership and joined-up thinking: A research review of front-line working with children and families.* (Frost, 2005)
“a process in which organisations exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other’s capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards”

(Himmelman, 1992)
### Challenges to interagency working

#### Contextual barriers / political climate
- Changes in political steer
- Financial uncertainty
- A climate of constant organisational change
- Agency boundaries not co-terminous

#### Organisational challenges
- Different agency policies, procedures and systems
- Agencies have different remits and do not collect the same data
- Professional, technical and ethical obstacles to information sharing

#### Commitment obstacles
- Lack of explicit commitment to interagency working
- Differing levels of ‘buy-in’; some agencies reluctant to engage
- Where managers do not experience interagency working as part of core work, it is vulnerable to changes in work priorities

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A review of international evidence on interagency working to inform the development of Children’s Services Committees in Ireland. (Statham, 2011)
What is Challenging?

Shifting leaders’ mindsets to focus on systems change

- Asking community to accept/support/buy into a cultural shift
- Seeing the forest instead of the trees (big picture thinking)
- Understanding the "language"

Clashing egos from those not accustomed to collaboration

- Ensuring equal voice / everyone is heard
- Competing agendas and priorities i.e., focus on sustaining "my" organization vs. the collective
- Moving/helping partners move beyond their own mission/interests/issues

Finding and attracting funders

- Developing a plan for sustainable funding
- Move beyond competing for funding to having seed funding / startup
- Engage funders effectively

Adapted from Collective Impact Champions of Change San Francisco Backbone Workshop
What Is Challenging?

**Time**
- To develop structures
- To develop trust

**Effectively capturing and using data for action**
- Creating a culture that responds to data, not just to look at
- Finding data / info
- Finding data / info that is not easily captured

**Sharing power and credit**

Culture of territoriality
Reducing competition and increasing power sharing amongst partners at the table
Switch thinking from how does it benefit me
What Is Challenging?

- Meeting fatigue
  - Too much process
  - Partners exhausted after long planning process

- Moving from planning to action
  - Getting partners to work in-between meetings
  - Capacity issues of partners
  - Individuals changing the way they work to better align with the collaborative

- Unequal progress
  - Unequal engagement across groups
  - Hard to balance focus on building structure with focus on making progress on strategies
What Is Challenging?

- Educating funders on the power of the work
- Managing changes in leadership over time
- Sustaining membership

- Educating funders to transition their types of funding
- "Leadership churn" - managing change around the table
- Educating new leaders joining the initiative, especially from new sectors or organisations
- Keeping people at the table
- Developing champions
The effective collaborator

Interpersonal Skills
• curating, nudging, facilitating, engaging, trust-building, problem-solving, clarifying, compromising, improvising

Personal attributes
• willingness, self-awareness, empathy, openness, humility, creativity, persistence, risk-oriented

Technical skills
• project management, time management, subject expertise, performance management, group dynamics
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

HOW ARE IRELAND’S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

This section of our website provides "snap shots" of how children and young people in Ireland are doing. We thematically present data on children and young people’s lives in relation to the Five National Outcomes for children and young people in alignment with Better Outcomes Brighter Futures the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020.

One-third of Ireland’s population is under the age of 25.

According to preliminary data from the Central Statistics Office, the estimated total population of children and young people (aged 0-24) in Ireland is 1.54 million, or 33% of the total population. This is a 5.25% increase in population size since 2002. Fifty-one percent of 0 to 24 year olds are male and forty-nine percent are female (Central Statistics Office, 2019a).

Ireland’s population of children and young people is growing while other Western countries are experiencing reducing birth rates. The greatest growth is in the 0-4 age group which has seen an increase of 30% since 2002 (Central Statistics Office, 2019b).
“Agencies need to accept that interagency working is a learning process, with tensions and difficulties as well as insights and innovation.”

Statham, 2011
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