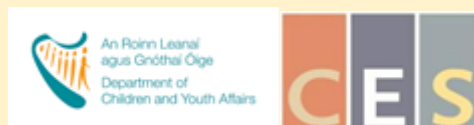




# **CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop Record**

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

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## Background and introduction

Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) are a key structure identified by Government to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. Their overall purpose is to improve outcomes for children and young people through local and national inter-agency working. A *Blueprint for the development of Children and Young People’s Services Committees* (DCYA, 2015) charts the development of CYPSC operationally and strategically over the next number of years. One important element of the *Blueprint’s* Action Plan is to develop the CYPSC reporting framework.

In order to progress this *Blueprint* action a working group day was convened by the National Co-ordinator for Children and Young People’s Services Committees in September 2016 to engage CYPSC stakeholders in discussions to inform the development of a CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework. The working group day used a workshop format to involve CYPSC stakeholders in thinking and discussion that would build upon current systems for planning and reporting and explore possibilities for enhancement as appropriate.

Expressions of interest in participation in this working group day were sought from CYPSC stakeholders with the aim of achieving a balance across workshop participants by drawing from a number of categories of stakeholder namely:

CYPSC Steering Group Members	CYPSC Chairpersons	CYPSC Co-ordinators	CYPSC Facilitators
State agencies	Government Departments	National Advisory Council <sup>[1]</sup>	Other stakeholders E.G CYPSC members

The workshop with key informants, which is the subject of this report, is one of the steps towards the goal of developing a CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework. A list of those who participated in the workshop is provided in [Appendix 1](#). This report is a record of the proceedings from that workshop. All participants were circulated a number of documents in advance as key reading materials. Namely:

- [Blueprint for the development of Children and Young People’s Services Committees](#)
- [A Brief Review of Planning and Reporting Arrangements of Inter-agency Initiatives](#)
- [Template for the Children and Young People’s Plan \(CYPP\)](#)

## Workshop aims and objectives

The stated aim of September’s workshop was

To convene a working group of CYPSC stakeholders to consult with and to discuss the development of a CYPSC planning and reporting framework.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To clarify CYPSC-specific planning and reporting activities already in place
- To elicit views on the purpose of CYPSC planning and CYPSC reporting

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Advisory Council is a key part of the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures implementation infrastructure. The Council brings together stakeholders from the community and voluntary sector, as well as independent experts with experience in working with and for children and young people.

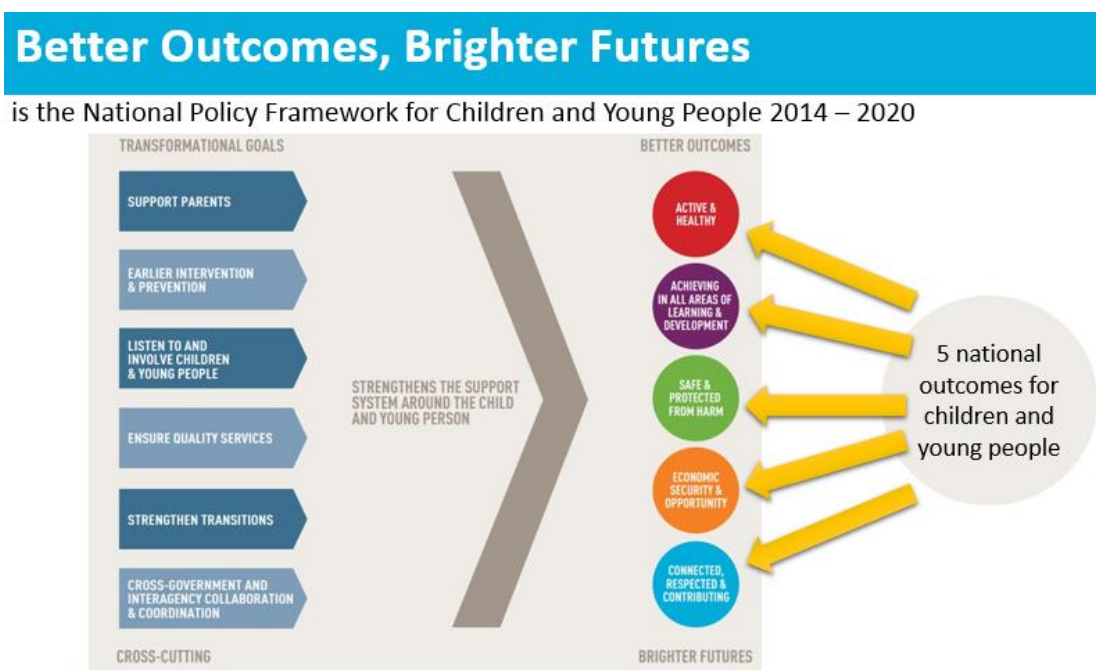
- To present learning about what exists in similar inter-agency initiatives in order to inform thinking and discussions regarding a CYPSC planning and reporting framework
- To identify parallel initiatives or processes in Ireland and how they might contribute to / impact upon CYPSC planning and reporting
- To discuss what needs to be included in CYPSC reports; local to national and national to national.
- To identify what supports may be required by CYPSC for quality planning and reporting.

The CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop agenda is available in [Appendix 2](#).

## National policy context and picture

Following an opening round robin of introductions with workshop participants Colma Nic Lughadha, National Co-ordinator for CYPSC gave a presentation providing an overview of current Irish policy that is informing the evolution of CYPSC and that guides CYPSC operations.

This input included information on [Better Outcomes Brighter Futures the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020](#) which identifies CYPSC as a key structure to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. [Better Outcomes Brighter Futures](#) also presents the five national outcomes for children and young people; the outcomes framework to which CYPSC work aligns.



The [Blueprint for the development of Children and Young People’s Services Committees](#) was also covered, by the National Co-ordinator, who outlined that it charts the development of CYPSC into 2017 and beyond, while noting that the Action Plan 2015 – 2017 within the [Blueprint](#) makes commitments pertaining to CYPSC Monitoring, Reporting, Learning and Evaluation. In particular, the [Blueprint](#) commits to the development of a CYPSC reporting framework.

## Blueprint for CYPSC



- Chart the development of CYPSC operationally and strategically over the next number of years

- ACTION PLAN

### Monitoring, Reporting, Learning & Evaluation

“Development of reporting framework for CYPSCs”, p.35

The presentation then progressed to a high-level summary of the purpose, objectives, membership, structure and planning approach of the CYPSC initiative. A copy of the workshop presentation slides are provided as [Appendix 3](#).

## Current CYPSC planning and reporting mechanisms

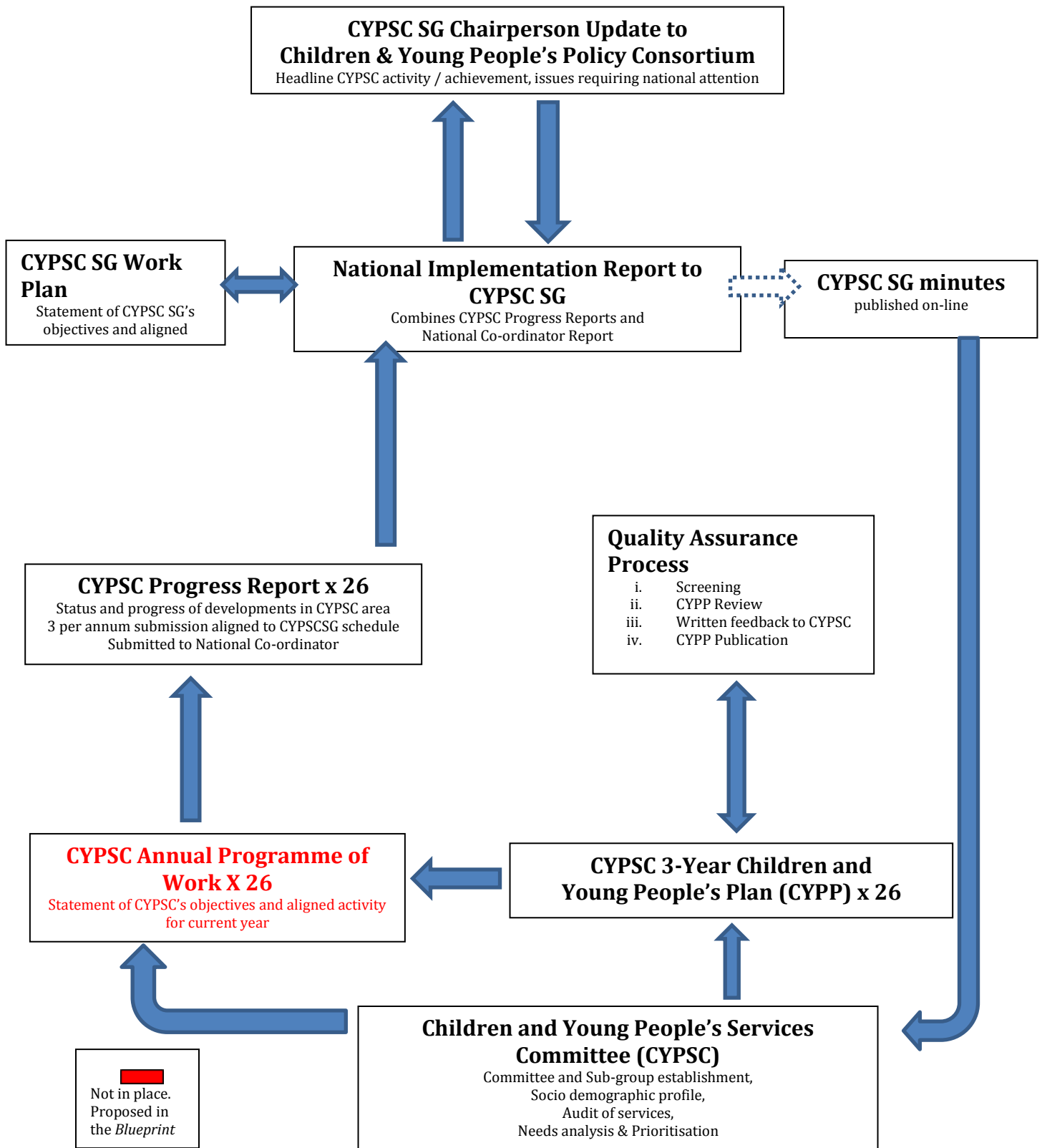
A stated objective of this CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop was to clarify CYPSC-specific planning and reporting activities already in place. A map of current CYPSC Planning and Reporting activity was accordingly circulated with contextualisation provided by the National Co-ordinator for CYPSC. See Figure 1 page 4. The map sketches out, on one page, the various planning and reporting activities that the CYPSC initiative currently undertakes from local level to national level. It notes that each CYPSC develops a three-year Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) designed to improve outcomes for children and young people across the five national outcomes.

Also notable is that CYPSC produce regular progress updates, requested by the National Co-ordinator on behalf of DCYA, that report on local CYPSC activity under the five national outcomes. This local information from each CYPSC is combined with national level work to produce a National Implementation Update that is presented to the National CYPSC Steering Group three times per year.

This stage of the workshop served to support workshop participants to arrive at a common level of awareness and understanding of the current scope of CYPSC planning and reporting. From here the workshop progressed to discussion and debate pertaining to the remaining workshop objectives.

Figure 1. Current CYPSC planning and reporting activity

# CYPSC Planning and Reporting Activity



## Exploration of the concepts of planning and reporting

In keeping with the working group intention of this CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop participants were asked to reflect on their experience of and understandings of the two concepts: 1. Planning and 2. Reporting. Discussion was stimulated through some questions related to each concept:

Question 1: Think about your own workplace: What types of plans are produced? Why do we plan?

Question 2: Think about your own workplace: What types of reports are produced? Why do we report? To whom? And how are these reports used?

Results of the discussion were recorded to flip chart and are presented below.

### Planning

#### What types of plans are produced?

Broadly speaking it was identified that plans could fall into three types; Strategic Plans, Operational Plans and Tactical Plans. Participants noted that the purpose of a plan, the time span which the plan covered, the level of detail included in the plan and the tier of management or staffing involved in development and implementation of the plan differed across the three types. For example, an organisation's strategic plan might be developed by upper and middle management, set out long range goals for the organisation and the overall strategy to attain those goals over a three to five-year period. Whereas a tactical plan, for example a critical incident plan, might be developed by middle and lower management, identifying specific actions to be taken to address an immediate need over a short period of time between a week and a few months.

Types of plans				
Type of plan	Description	Planning horizon	Specificity	Management Level
Strategic	Outlines major goals Outlines position and overarching strategy to attain goals	Long term	Directional	Upper and middle
Operational	Specifies actions and responsibilities to achieve strategic goals.	Short term	Specific	Middle and lower
Tactical	Describes the actions managers adopt to deal with a specific opportunity/threat	Short term	Specific	Middle and lower

#### Why do we plan?

In addressing the question as to "why we plan" workshop participants identified many of the benefits of planning including:

- Strategic development - a plan can be a guide to an organisation's future for the short term, medium term and longer-term.
- Clarity – a plan can provide clarity of organisational purpose and can identify what different parts of the organisation is doing. It can assist in the identification of roles and responsibilities.
- Cohesion - a plan can support cohesion across an organisation.

- Thinking space - the act of planning can provide a space for collective reflection, learning and innovative thinking.
- Control - planning enables better control by managers of an organisation.
- Motivation – a plan can inform the motivation of people to achieve organisational objectives.

## The benefits of planning

- Planning gives direction and purpose to an organisation; it is a mechanism for deciding the goals of the organisation
- Planning is the process by which management allocates scarce resources, including capital and people, to different activities
- Planning drives operating budgets – strategic, operations, and unit plans determine financial budgets for the coming year
- Planning assigns roles and responsibilities to individuals and units within the organisation
- Planning enables managers to better control the organisation

## Reporting

### What types of reports are produced?

A wide range of report types were listed by workshop participants. Factors such as time of the year, audience, nature of content and mode of delivery were highlighted. For example, an annual report, produced for the attention of a funder, reporting on activity and outcomes of an organisation’s work, produced in written format.

### Why do we report?

In answering the question as to “why do we report” participants identified a number of benefits to reporting including:

- Oversight – reports assist management in their role overseeing delivery and performance and can flag or signal areas requiring more energy or focus. Reports ensure there is a databank to refer to for accountability and up-to-date information and can facilitate analysis i.e. comparative analysis, trend analysis or thematic analysis. Trends for example can be drawn out and fed into next year planning.
- Communication – a report can be a communication tool for a specific audience or multiple audiences and can be used to disseminate information up, down, across or outwards. It can also be used to set the narrative and influence how facts are presented.
- Learning – some reports can support the sharing of wisdom to support organisational learning. Reports can be used to highlight gaps and identify issues requiring attention.
- Affirmation – recording and presenting “the work” within a report can serve to affirm the achievements from the work itself and of the workers.

### To whom do we report?

Workshop participants identified management and funders as the primary stakeholders for whom reports are prepared and to whom they are submitted. Other stakeholders named were young people and the community.

## How are these reports used?

It was suggested that reports can be used to answer the *so what?* question. They can also be used as part of a performance measurement process and as a method of disseminating important information or messages. The act of collation in the preparation of a report was considered a method for surfacing themes and for identifying trends. It was also thought that reports could also be used for comparative analysis.

### Benefits of reports

- Increased communication
  - multi-directional: upward, downward, lateral; Can connect units
  - Internal & external
  - Concurrent.
  - Also emphasises what is of concern or important to the report user
- More accurate planning and forecasting
- Supports better decision-making
- Timely evaluation and control
- Can change thinking!

## Exploration of planning and reporting in the context of CYPSC

Following the large group discussion of planning and reporting, workshop participants worked in small groups to apply some of the morning's thinking more specifically to the CYPSC context. The groups were asked to respond to the following question sets:

Question 3 Planning: CYPSC currently develop three-year Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP).

- a) Why do CYPSC develop plans?
- b) Who is the audience of the CYPP?
- c) How is the CYPP used?
- d) What is missing from the current planning approach?
- e) i. What is missing from current Children and Young People's Plans?  
ii. Are there aspects of CYPPs that could be strengthened?

Question 4: Reporting:

- a) What types of reports are CYPSC producing currently?
- b) Who is the audience of CYPSC reports?
- c) How often are CYPSC producing reports?
- d) How are CYPSC reports being used? For what and by whom?
- e) What would CYPSC like to report on? And Why? What would it take to make that happen?

Having recorded their answers to the above questions to flip chart the large group then re-convened for a plenary where answers across the small groups were shared and discussed. A summary of those discussions is provided [here](#).



## CYPSC Planning

It is broadly recognised that inter-agency working and information sharing is important in ensuring the welfare and well-being of children and young people. This has been highlighted nationally and internationally in recent years. Children and Young People's Services Committees are a vehicle for such inter-agency work. They currently develop and implement a three-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) serving to unite multiple agencies in joint planning, co-ordination, service provision and action in order to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children and young people in their county.

It was thought that the audiences for CYPSC plans include Government, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, funders, CYPSC members, agencies including Tusla-Child and Family Agency, the National Co-ordinator for CYPSC, children and young people and families. It was also noted that in the future CYPSC Children and Young People's Plans should be written or presented in a format accessible to children and young people.

Workshop participants identified that children and young people's plans are being used to present information gathered regarding needs and services within the CYPSC area. The plans are also used to communicate with various audiences providing information relevant to the lives of children and young people and to addressing CYPSC purpose i.e. improving outcomes for children and young people. The plans are also being used as a tool to lever funding and resources into the CYPSC area. Finally some workshop participants noted that the plans were being used to map progress towards achieving the five national outcomes for children and young people named in [\*Better Outcomes Brighter Futures\*](#).

In terms of the current planning approach it was recognised that while data on the lives of children and young people is important the facts are that data is difficult to access in a timely manner and that its collection is an onerous task. Workshop participants noted that the planning approach needs to accommodate responses to emerging needs while balancing the priorities of different agencies and maintain equilibrium between bottom-up and top-down approaches. A number of enhancements to children and young people's planning were suggested including:

- aligning timelines of Children and Young People's Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans
- strengthening the voice for children and young people within plans
- celebrate CYPSC achievements within the plans
- improve accessibility of data to inform planning
- improve dissemination of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP) within CYPSC member agencies
- clarify to whom are CYPSC accountable in terms of development and delivery of the CYPP
- the planning template needs to reflect back individual agencies / CYPSC members. In other words, the planning questions need to ascertain what elements of CYPSC members' work programme or responsibilities require inter-agency work that CYPSC can support.

Proceeding through the day's agenda the workshop turned its attention to a reflection on CYPSC reporting.

## CYPSC Reporting

Children and Young People's Services Committees are currently required to provide progress update reports three times per year at intervals aligned to National CYPSC Steering Group meetings. In the main the content of these regular reports focusses on CYPSC activity and includes

- CYPSC action under each of the five national outcomes for children and young people
- Challenges or issues arising for a CYPSC

- Achievements or highlights from CYPSC work.

An observation was made that the frequency of this practice leads to the experience that as soon as one report is submitted that the work begins on preparing the next report. Additionally, it was observed that the composite national implementation report submitted to the National CYPSC Steering Group, drawing on the regular local progress updates, needs to include more detail regarding local CYPSC activity.

It was noted that some CYPSC are also providing quarterly reports to their Local Community Development Committee and that written and verbal reports are produced by CYPSC Sub-groups for the attention of a local CYPSC.

It was thought that the audiences for CYPSC reports include the CYPSC itself, the National CYPSC Steering Group and the National Co-ordinator for CYPSC and that CYPSC reports are being used by the National CYPSC Steering Group in the main.

The group discussions considered that CYPSC should report on the actual impact of CYPSC on children and young people. It was thought that reports need to

- emphasise the value of CYPSC capturing the process and the success
- provide a clear picture of what is happening through the CYPSC
- include information that illustrates how CYPSC is supporting implementation of the [National Youth Strategy](#) and the [National strategy on children and young people's participation in decision-making](#) and other national themes
- capture and present the level of inter-agency work, the added value of inter-agency work and how this made a difference
- report how CYPSC is dealing with national priority issues.

Some workshop participants noted that a local newsletter or e-zine can showcase local CYPSC activity or what the CYPSC is doing and that these types of format are accessible to a broader audience.

Regarding observations related to enhancing use of CYPSC reports there was little additional thinking proffered but an emphasis that the value of inter-agency working has to be evidenced within the reports.

# Key features of planning and reporting arrangements of inter-agency initiatives

Lisa Ann Kennedy, Project Specialist at the Centre for Effective Services ([CES](#)) opened the afternoon session of the CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop with a presentation on some key features of planning and reporting arrangements. See [Appendix 4](#) for presentation slides. Specifically, this input provided a high-level summary of

[A Brief Review of Planning and Reporting Arrangements of Inter-agency Initiatives](#), which had been circulated as advance reading for workshop participants. This [Brief Review](#) had been conducted by [CES](#) to provide a tool to stimulate thinking and discussion about planning and reporting within an inter-agency context.

## 11 key features of planning and reporting identified across the inter-agency initiatives reviewed

In summary eleven predominant features of planning and reporting arrangements of inter-agency initiatives were presented. They are listed below for reference within this workshop record. It is recommended that the reader access the source document, [A Brief Review of Planning and Reporting Arrangements of Inter-agency Initiatives](#), as an accompaniment to this workshop record and in order to access greater detail on which inter-agency initiatives were explored, as well as some of the learning and pertinent questions posed by the [Brief Review](#).

Eleven predominant features of planning and reporting arrangements of inter-agency initiatives:

### 11 Predominant Features Identified

- Thematic Framework
- Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)
- Templates
- Local Plans
- Reporting Guidelines
- Staffing
- Programme Budget
- Centralised Data Systems
- Interagency Performance Data
- Trend Analysis
- Cross Comparability

## Exploration of what key features are most relevant to CYPSC

In the final segment of the CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop participants were invited to discuss all of the features presented and to then put forward any of the features that they considered to be the most relevant or helpful for inclusion in a CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework.

In the feedback, it was thought that all eleven features are potentially useful even though there are challenges associated with some. For example, features such as Outcomes Based Accountability, Trend Analysis and Cross Comparability require access to timely data which is not currently available to CYPSC in any comprehensively

systematic way. The old adage that “form follows function” was also sounded by some participants in emphasising that the purpose of CYPSC and resultant planning and reporting needs to be the foundation of any thinking regarding the formation of a framework. To follow is a summary of the discussion points generated by workshop participants.

The five national outcomes for children and young people framework is helpful. It provides broad themes within which to situate CYPSC work and guides local services in responding to national priorities in [Better Outcomes Brighter Futures the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People](#) and its supporting strategies. CYPSC actions can be aligned to each outcome although some actions can speak to or address one, two, three or more national outcomes, making it difficult locally to select just one outcome with which to align an action. It was noted that a strength of the Communities that Care, Pennsylvania, USA inter-agency initiative is that it manages to capture and reflect the voice of children and young people in its use of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) that is aligned to a resilience and protective factors framework. Some workshop participants proposed that “Actions Based Accountability” under the five national outcomes would be a suitable adaptation when following the five national outcomes thematic framework.

Local plans that respond to local need following a common template were thought to be essential. In particular workshop participants felt that being able to be locally responsive was more important than compliance with set programmatic funding streams.

There was broad agreement that there needs to be some way of reporting the inter-agency process piece and that it would be helpful to have inter-agency data. Simple measures regarding getting and keeping engagement of partners / stakeholders. For example, a list of member agencies, level of attendance of senior personnel, agency responsible named beside specific actions graduating to reflections over time on inter-agency performance. Also noted in the vein of collecting data on inter-agency working was the current Health Services Executive approach to its engagement with Local Community Development Committees (LCDC). The HSE undertook a scanning of Local Economic and Community Plans to ascertain to what extent HSE priority objectives such as tackling obesity, promoting physical activity and smoking cessation were reflected within those county plans. Some workshop participants thought that it may be necessary to provide greater clarity surrounding what is meant by inter-agency working. To define what it is in the context of CYPSC in order to be able to adequately report on it.

Data was identified as being an essential. Access to data produced centrally and access to local data specific to services or small areas in particular was thought to be fundamentally required. Both quantitative and qualitative data were recognised as being of value. Common data systems across organisations to facilitate effective data sharing and to ensure that CYPSC are measuring the same phenomenon in the same way are needed. Quality data using a common set of relevant indicators that can be applied at a number of levels e.g. national, county and small area is needed. Another option is to have a small set of common indicators across all CYPSC, within a larger set of indicators that a CYPSC can select from based on what their local needs analysis tells them they need to design a response to. A third option is to retain a small set of common indicators and allow CYPSC to nominate whatever other indicators they deem appropriate in order to measure effectiveness of local responses to local need.

The necessity or not of requiring CYPSC to report on specific target groups was discussed. CYPSC are universal and for all children and young people in the county / CYPSC area. CYPSC also apply a progressive universalism approach in recognition that some children and young people, by virtue of their needs and/ or experience of poverty, will need extra supports on top of universal provision of basic supports and services. In determining whether to necessitate CYPSC to report on specific target groups workshop participants advised that consideration be taken of international obligations such as those stemming from the [Istanbul Convention](#) – the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of](#)

[the Child](#) and the need to prioritise particularly vulnerable groups such as Travellers, Roma and children in direct provision.

In terms of staffing it was noted that while the recent augmentation in the number of CYPSC Co-ordinators is a welcome necessity, that sufficient staffing to truly support effective CYPSC remains a key concern. It was thought that CYPSC do require an annual discretionary budget also to enable them to plan, perform and realise their potential in making a big difference in the lives of children and young people. There was no discussion of reporting guidelines.

## Existing initiatives, programmes or systems that could inform the CYPSC initiative

In developing a CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework it will be important to build on existing strengths within our systems. In light of this, workshop participants were asked to identify any existing or planned practice or mechanism in the environment that they were aware of that could inform the development of a CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework. The following lists the range of items that workshop participants highlighted:

- Local Economic and Community Plans.
- Tusla Child and Family Agency reporting mechanisms.
- The Census – align CYPSC planning and reporting cycles with census data publication e.g. 5 year cycles.
- National and regional priorities of individual departments or agencies. For example, [Rebuilding Ireland](#) Action Plan for Housing and Homeless. There needs to be a “national trigger” for CYPSC to be aware of national developments; a structured system for CYPSC to hear about developments that they may have an implementation role in. Colma Nic Lughadha noted that one of the National CYPSC Steering Group actions in its work plan is intended to address this type of need.
- An alignment of Tusla Child and Family Support Network areas with Health Service Executive Primary Care Network areas could assist data collection and reporting.
- Meitheal – how does it relate to CYPSC?
- National Children and Young People’s Advisory Council Work Plan.
- National Indicator set to monitor outcomes for children and young people.
- Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Review.
- Quality and Capacity Building Initiative planned by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

## Identification of supports CYPSC need in relation to planning and reporting

In closing Colma Nic Lughadha noted that specific guidance and training and supports would likely need to be developed to support quality CYPSC planning and reporting. Workshop participants were asked to consider whether any other types of support would be necessary and to feed any ideas or thoughts on this back to the National Co-ordinator for CYPSC upon receipt of the record of this CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework Workshop.

## Concluding remarks

The participation of such a diversity of CYPSC stakeholders ensured that the vital discussions of the day were rich and delivered valuable insights from which to build a planning and reporting framework. Colma Nic Lughadha expressed appreciation to all who attended from across Ireland and from the expanse of services and sectors. A record of the workshop will be produced and circulated and will combine with other elements to inform the development of the CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework.