



CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICES

# **Paper Outlining Recommendations Relating to the Governance of Children's Services Committees**

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**15 June 2010**



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the CSC chairs, co-ordinators and members, and the representatives from the OMCYA and various government departments and agencies who sit on the NCSIG, who shared with us their experiences of, and ideas about, the Children's Services Committee initiative in Ireland.

We would particularly like to thank the following who generously shared their knowledge and experience of interagency initiatives with us: Aisling Gillen, National Specialist Family Support, HSE; Billy McMillan & Carol Gribben, Barnardo's N.I. / Children's Services Planning, Northern Ireland; Carole Payne, Durham Children's Trust; Kathy Lally, Montgomery County Collaboration Council; Rachel Szabo Lael & Talia Hasin, National Program for Children and Youth at Risk, Israel.

We would like to thank Gillian Barwise, currently on secondment to the CES team from the OMCYA, for her contributions to this paper.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Liza Clancy, from the Resources team in the Centre, who provided us with excellent administrative and logistics support in relation to this project.



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## Section 1: Introduction, Objective and Definitions

### 1.1 Introduction

Governments worldwide are at different stages in terms of implementing interagency structures to improve outcomes for children. There is a widely held belief that such structures show much promise in terms of providing more co-ordinated, integrated services for children.

In Ireland, the Children's Services Committees are an important national initiative designed to bring together a diverse group of agencies in local county areas to engage in joint planning and interagency collaboration in delivery of services for children.

### 1.2 Centre for Effective Services and our role in relation to Children's Services Committees

The Centre for Effective Services (CES) is an independent not-for-profit organisation set up in 2008, funded jointly by The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA), and the Department for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs (formerly the Department of Rural, Community and Gaeltacht Affairs). Our overarching aim is to promote the development of evidence-informed and evidence-based policy and practice in child and community services. We aim to increase the success of services in improving the lives of children and communities across the island of Ireland by filling an internationally recognised gap: that is, connecting the design and delivery of services with scientific and technical knowledge of 'what works'. We aim to provide the technical and organisational expertise required to support the design, implementation and ongoing review and development of evidence-informed services. Broadly speaking, our overarching institutional aims can be summarised as:

- To promote and support the application of an **evidence-informed approach** to policy and practice in child, family and community services
- To promote the development of **collaborative, joined up working** that is outcomes-focused across research, policy and service providing organisations
- To **build capacity** within Ireland and Northern Ireland to take this work forward in the longer term by developing knowledge, skills and competencies.

In 2009, the Centre was asked by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMYCA), part of the Department of Health and Children in Ireland, to assist with, and advise on, the strategic development of Children's Services Committees (CSCs). A three year project plan was agreed between the Centre and OMCYA which outlines the support that CES will provide to the continuing development of the CSC initiative. In May 2010 CES, as part of the early stages of the work, produced a report outlining the learning from the early implementation of the CSCs in four pilot areas, *Learning from experience to inform the future – Findings emerging from the initial phase of the Children's Services Committees* (Centre for Effective Services, 2010). This report will be referred to as the *Learning Report* in the remainder of this paper.



### 1.3 Objective of this paper

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs established the Children's Services Committees (CSCs) in Ireland in 2007 with the purpose of improving outcomes for children and families at local and community level, through integrated planning and service delivery. It is widely acknowledged that now, three years into the initiative, there is a need to clearly define the governance arrangements for the CSC initiative. This need is reflected in the *Strategic Plan for the Development and Implementation of the CSC initiative* (OMCYA, 2010) which was agreed by the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG) in April 2010. This document will be referred to as the *Strategic Plan* in the remainder of this paper.

This paper makes recommendations for the governance arrangements for the CSC initiative at national level, and at local level, for both existing and new CSCs. The recommendations have been developed based on:

- The findings and recommendations in the *Learning Report*
- Observations from similar multi-agency initiatives in other countries, relating to governance.

Many of the governance recommendations identified in this report have much in common with governance issues in a range of programmes, initiatives and organisations in various sectors and settings.

The recommendations take into account the specific context and structures within which CSCs exist in Ireland. Every country has its own structures and culture, which inform its governance arrangements; it is also important not to be overly constrained by such factors when exploring governance options.

The governance issues and recommendations outlined in this report are likely to be explored further during other work being conducted by the Centre for Effective Services in support of Children's Services Committees.

It is envisaged that the recommendations should be discussed and decided on, by the NCSIG and relevant government departments and agencies.



## 1.4 Definitions

In discussing the concepts of governance, there are a wide variety of definitions which could be used. In the interests of clarity and to promote a common understanding, we have set out below a number of **working definitions** for the purpose of this paper.

**GOVERNANCE** derives from the Greek verb which means to steer. It refers to the activity of governing. It can be helpful to think of governance in terms of the use of institutions, structures of authority and collaboration to allocate resources and coordinate activity<sup>1</sup>. **In short, governance refers to the principles and processes by which an initiative is overseen and regulated. It also refers to the process of decision making.**

**MANDATE** is the authority which is assigned to a specific body or entity (such as a CSC) by an authoritative source (such as a Government Department or Agency). In terms of the CSC mandate it refers to what the CSC has been authorised to do and from where that authority comes.

**REMIT** describes the scope of a specific body or initiative (such as a CSC) and the extent of its authority.

**FUNCTIONS** are the activities by which an entity (such as a CSC) fulfils its purpose.

## 1.5 Scope

The recommendations relating to governance outlined in this paper refer to both the national governance of the CSC initiative and the local Committees themselves (at city and county levels).

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<sup>1</sup> Bell, Stephen (2002) *Economic Governance and Institutional Dynamics*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Australia



## Section 2: Current Governance of the Children's Services Committees

This section outlines the origins of the CSC initiative and their current governance arrangements.

### 2.1 Origins of the Children's Services Committee initiative

#### **Policy context**

The CSC initiative in Ireland was informed and influenced by several major Government policies. These include:

- a) *The National Children's Strategy* (2000), which seeks to establish a 'whole child' perspective at the centre of all relevant policy development and service delivery
- b) The ten-year Social Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016* (2006) which made specific commitments regarding the establishment of Children's Services Committees
- c) *The Agenda for Children's Services: A policy handbook* (2007), which is the framework that applies the principles of the National Children's Strategy to the implementation of policies and service delivery. At the core of the Agenda is the promotion and achievement of the seven national outcomes for children
- d) *The Programme for Government* (2007) which gave a commitment to accelerate the establishment of CSCs and the *Renewed Programme for Government* (2009) which states that a CSC will be established in each county by 2016.

#### **Background and concept**

In 2007, a decision was made to establish the Children's Services Committees on a phased basis. Four Children's Services Committees were set up by the OMCYA during the course of 2007 in Donegal, Dublin City, Limerick City and South Dublin. The OMCYA's intention in establishing the CSCs was that all major organisations working on behalf of children and young people would come together at local level. These committees were to engage in joint planning and eventually collaborative interagency delivery of services for children, and be responsible for improving outcomes for children at local level, based on the seven national outcomes.

The OMCYA's view was that in order to develop a model that could be replicated, the concept had to be designed and informed from the ground up. CSCs were therefore only given a basic model and a broad outline of the purpose of the work to experiment with. Structured on a county basis, each CSC has been given considerable flexibility to develop its own structure and modus operandi, with the result that no two CSCs are exactly alike.

#### **National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG)**

The National Children's Strategy Implementation Group was set up to drive the implementation of the National Children's Strategy. It is a high level group, chaired by the OMCYA that consists of



senior officials from all government departments and state agencies that develop policies or deliver services that affect all children and young people. The stated vision of the NCSIG is that:

*“Children, young people and their families will receive the support and services they need to create better futures for children through all local agencies and organisations working together.”<sup>2</sup>*

In relation to the CSCs, the role of the NCSIG has been to provide oversight on their development and implementation.

### ***Purpose of the Children’s Services Committees***

Since their establishment there has been much discussion regarding the mandate and purpose of the CSCs. Towards the end of 2009, the OMCYA with the assistance of the CES led the development of a *Strategic Plan for the Development and Implementation of the CSC initiative* (OMCYA 2010), which built on the emerging thinking in relation to CSCs.

This plan, approved by the National Children’s Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG) in April 2010, states that **the overall purpose of the CSCs is to secure better developmental outcomes for children through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.** This decision confirms that CSCs are concerned with improving outcomes for all children, planning and delivering more effective integrated services to the wider population of children in the county area.

### ***Leadership***

Leadership of the CSC initiative, at **national** level, has been provided by the OMCYA.

The OMCYA designated the Health Services Executive (HSE) to lead this new initiative at **local** level and to chair each Committee. This decision was driven by the fact that the HSE is responsible for child welfare and protection and family support services, and employs trained professionals to support the delivery of these services.

## **2.2 The four existing Children’s Services Committees – how they operate**

The four CSCs in Donegal, Dublin City, Limerick City and South Dublin became operational during 2007, albeit at different times during that year.

The OMCYA is currently working with a number of new Children’s Services Committees which are in the process of being established. The intention as articulated in the *Strategic Plan* is that twenty or more county level CSCs will be planned and operational by the end of 2012.

### ***Structure, membership and subgroups***

Although each of the four CSCs is unique they share two common features: they all have a Chair (a HSE Local Health Manager); and, they all have a co-ordinator (part or full time) which is funded

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<sup>2</sup> OMCYA, Working Together for Children Leaflet, (OMCYA, 2009)





from within existing resources. Each of the CSCs has developed a Work Plan or Action Plan, and all have established subgroups around specific outcomes / issues, which are chaired by a member of the CSC (who is accountable to the CSC for the subgroup) and usually includes a number of other CSC members.

Table 1 below outlines the subgroups in each of four CSCs.

**Table 1: CSC outcomes & sub-groups**

Donegal (Outcomes & sub-groups)	Dublin City (Outcomes & sub-groups)	Limerick City (Sub-groups)	South Dublin (Outcomes & sub-groups)
Health & holistic well-being	Child care	LANS (Limerick assessment of need system)	Child welfare, child protection & family support
Economic security	Healthy living	Research framework	Participation
Safe & Secure	Safety	Restorative practice	Safe & secure
Lifelong learning	Literacy & Numeracy		Education, training & learning
Information	Interagency collaboration	Engagement with city wide youth fora	Communications, data & planning
			Interagency case work

Source: CSC work plans/action plans

While the four CSCs have roughly analogous membership profiles, different approaches to membership of the committee have evolved, based on the history of interagency and cross-sector initiatives in the area. All four CSCs have senior representatives from the major statutory providers of services to children and families on the committee (for example, the HSE, the local authority, An Garda Síochána, the Vocational Educational Committee, the Probation Service and the Department of Education and Skills).

However, with regard to the involvement of community and voluntary groups, there are some notable differences. Limerick City CSC includes members from government and statutory agencies only, although community and voluntary groups are represented on a number of Limerick City CSC's subgroups. Partnership companies sit on Donegal, Dublin City and South Dublin CSC and a number of large voluntary organisations sit on Dublin City and South Dublin CSCs.



## Section 3: Learning from the Children's Services Committees experience to date

### 3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the learning, in terms of governance, from the CSC experience to date. It is drawn largely from the CES report *Learning from experience to inform the future – Findings emerging from the initial phase of the Children's Services Committees*, (Centre for Effective Services, May 2010).

It is widely accepted that the CSCs are a long term initiative, and that they are at a relatively early stage of their development. Much of their initial work has centred on developing structures and processes. This appears to be consistent with both similar large scale initiatives being developed internationally, where the indications are that measurable impact at the level of specific outcomes for children and young people takes time to emerge, and large scale change management initiatives.

### 3.2 Achievements in terms of governance

#### ***Relationships and understanding of roles***

The major area where the CSC initiative has had an early impact is in terms of building relationships between agencies and creating a greater understanding of respective roles. This process of relationship building has generated, according to key respondents, an overwhelming commitment to, and engagement with, the CSC initiative.

At national level, NCSIG members have emphasised the value of personal relationships built between senior members through the NCSIG. Government Departments have also expressed their interest in the OMCYA's effort to develop a coherent framework for the delivery of services to children.

During the preparation of the *Learning Report*, many individuals remarked that relationships between the HSE and local authorities at CSC level are working well. Some CSC members noted that interagency working at CSC level has been particularly powerful within the education sector.

#### ***Local champions and local ownership***

At local level, each CSC is chaired by a HSE Local Health Manager (LHM). Most of the CSCs have emphasised the value of a local champion who stays with the initiative over a reasonably long-term period. Champions came from different agencies across the four local areas.

At local level, a strong sense of local ownership has reportedly developed among both Committee and Subgroup members, in relation to the work being conducted by each CSC.



## **Structures**

A number of structures have been developed with the aim of enabling the CSCs to operate. The existence of these structures has facilitated the development of the CSCs to date. The main structures in place to support the initiative include:

- The CSC itself and CSC subgroups, in each area – all four CSCs have succeeded in sustaining representation on the committee by senior individuals from most of the major statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and families, in the area. This appears to be due to the fact that most, if not all, CSC members believe the CSC to be worthwhile, valuable and productive. There is a strong view that retaining senior representation on CSCs is essential and the fact that this has been the case, over the three years since their establishment, is a real achievement
- The CSC co-ordinator – the role of the co-ordinator is viewed as essential by all CSCs, and has been very important in driving forward the work of the Committee
- Reporting mechanisms – update reports from the CSCs to the NCSIG keep the NCSIG in touch with the work underway in each CSC
- Links to County Development Boards –the CSCs with links to the local County Development Boards have commented that being accountable at both local (i.e. county) and national level is helpful, given that CSCs have a local remit, but are operating as part of a national initiative.

### **3.3 Challenges and obstacles in terms of governance**

#### ***Leadership at local level***

In most CSCs, the HSE has provided leadership by chairing the CSC and driving the initiative forward. However, despite evidence of individual commitment at local level, the engagement of the HSE is not consistent across all CSC areas or at corporate level.

#### ***Mandate and remit of Children's Services Committees***

The *Learning Report* found that the mandate and remit of Children's Services Committees are not clear to those involved in them. There is no legislation or Government policy document which details where the authority to implement CSCs originates, or to which agency or body the CSC is answerable. The documents and publications that do exist describe the CSCs in different ways. This has created ambiguity around the mandate, remit and specific functions of the CSCs. The ambiguity appears to have hampered progress during the early stages of the four existing CSCs and, unless addressed, it will create similar problems for new CSCs.



### ***Universal versus targeted remit***

Before the *Strategic Plan* was agreed in April 2010, there was an ongoing debate within the CSCs, and in some Government Departments and agencies and at NCSIG, about whether CSCs are intended to benefit all children (i.e. are universal in their approach) or whether they should be focussed primarily on disadvantaged children (i.e. should take a targeted approach). This led to confusion about the purpose of CSCs.

### ***Funding***

There are differing views among CSCs about the role that they should have in influencing decisions about funding of services and initiatives in the area. One view is that the CSC should have input into funding decisions by government departments and agencies in the area, to ensure that new and expanded services and projects are in line with CSC priorities and plans. The other view is that having to operate from within existing resources promotes cooperation and prevents territorialism. There is also a question in regards to whether the CSC should be involved in influencing decisions, and how they should be kept informed about planned service developments.

### ***Accountability***

One of the findings which emerged from the *Learning Report* was that there is little clarity at local level regarding accountability. All four of the existing CSCs continue to spend significant time discussing what their mandate and specific functions are; what decisions they are meant to make; for what are they accountable, and to whom.

### ***Membership***

Representation on the CSCs has been the subject of debate in relation to three quarters: (1) Mainstream education (which has, to date, been in terms of a representative from the local Regional Office of the Department of Education and Skills); (2) The Department of Social Protection (formerly the Department of Social and Family Affairs). There is ongoing discussion regarding the role and involvement of these two Departments in the CSC initiative; (3) The involvement of the community and voluntary sector - Representatives from the community and voluntary sector sit on three out of the four CSCs. In the fourth CSC, the community and voluntary sector are represented in the subgroups only.

### ***Effectiveness of the NCSIG***

The NCSIG is seen largely by its members as a communication and information sharing forum, rather than a decision making body with a strategic focus. During the collection of information for the *Learning Report*, some NCSIG members commented to CES that the NCSIG can be unwieldy, and that it should be more action oriented.



Concerns were also expressed that senior representation at NCSIG seems to have become attenuated, and that there is a need to ensure representation which is both consistent and at a suitably senior level.

The need for a forum with the skills and expertise to discuss and agree technical and procedural issues requiring direction from national level to local CSCs is also an issue which has been raised.



## Section 4: Learning from other countries relating to governance

### 4.1 Introduction

This section will outline the learning from the implementation of national or state level interagency initiatives in other jurisdictions similar to the CSC initiative, with a particular focus on governance structures and processes. Key principles of effective governance will be identified specifically in the context of their application to the development of CSCs as a national initiative in Ireland. For this part of the report CES collated documentation and spoke with experts in six jurisdictions where there has been considerable prior experience and learning about governance issues for interagency working initiatives, relating to children and families. These are:

<b>Northern Ireland</b>	Children’s Services Planning (Northern Health & Social Services Board)
<b>England and Wales</b>	Children’s Trusts (Durham Children’s Trust)
<b>USA</b>	Maryland State Local Management Boards (Montgomery County Collaboration Council) Vermont State Agency of Human Services
<b>Israel</b>	National Program for Children and Youth at Risk
<b>New Zealand</b>	High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy

The preliminary exploration of governance arrangements within these jurisdictions is based around the following themes: overarching national objectives, legislative and policy frameworks, remit, functions, leadership and membership.

### 4.2 Overarching national objectives

The *Learning Report* made reference to the fact that governments worldwide were at different stages of implementing interagency structures to improve child well being. Central to the overarching objectives of the six initiatives mentioned above is to improve outcomes for children, young people and families through more effective collaborative and interagency partnerships. Underpinning these approaches is a focus on the whole family, to include both children and parents and the communities within which they live, and an emphasis on involvement of families in the design, planning and delivery of services.

### 4.3 Legislative and policy frameworks

What all these programmes or approaches share in common is that there are specified **outcomes** to be achieved to improve the well being of children in their designated area. Although the number of outcomes varies across jurisdictions, all of the outcomes include a focus on health, education and learning, economic security, physical safety and participating and being included in their community and society.

Many of the programmes or approaches have a **universal** focus, albeit with a target, where appropriate, on specific needs or groups, whilst two initiatives are **targeted** at particular child



populations, i.e. in Israel at children from birth to 18 defined as being 'at risk', and in New Zealand at children and young people with high and complex needs.

Four out of the six international initiatives derive their mandate from legislation, whilst two others are policy driven from an inter-ministerial strategy or partnership (New Zealand and Israel).

### ***Children's Services Planning, Northern Ireland***

Children's Services Planning in Northern Ireland is an interagency process which is child centred and aims to support families, carers and communities. A statutory duty was placed on each of the four health and social services boards to set up an Area Children and Young People's Committee to oversee the inter-agency planning of services for vulnerable children and young people in their area. It has an outcomes focus, based on the six outcomes as set out in *Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge, a ten year strategy for children and young people in Northern Ireland 2006 to 2016*. The four committees which are made up of representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors are required to produce a children's services plan every three years.

### ***Children's Trusts, England and Wales***

Similarly, The Children Act 2004 in England and Wales places a statutory 'duty to co-operate' on all relevant partners in local authorities in making arrangements to improve well being and outcomes for children and young people in their local area, through the establishment of Children's Trusts. Each Children's Trust has a statutory Board whose purpose is to bring all partners together to agree a common strategy on how they will co-operate to improve children's well-being and to help embed partnership working in the partners' routine delivery of their own functions.

Durham Children's Trust sets out the four overall goals for the Trust as:

- To bring partners within a single framework responsible for the major delivery of services to children young people and their families within the County
- To provide strategic leadership to ensure the development of and delivery of improved outcomes for children, young people and their families
- To agree and implement a Children and Young People's Plan
- To act cohesively to implement strategic decisions of the Children's Trust.

### ***United States***

The States of Vermont and Maryland both have legislative requirements to develop collaborative partnerships to achieve improved outcomes for children. Vermont has established regional partnerships which aim to:

- Focus on ten outcomes that improve the well being of all State members
- Engage diverse community members as partners
- Mobilise resources to enhance local support services and systems.



The State of Maryland has enshrined in State law the requirement to establish and maintain a Local Management Board within the differing Counties within the State, to ensure the implementation of a local interagency service delivery system for children, young people and families.

The legislation established the State's policy to promote a stable, safe and healthy environment for children and families through a comprehensive and integrated approach that:

- Provides a family and child oriented continuum of care that emphasises prevention, early intervention and community based services
- Gives priority to children and families most at risk.

Montgomery County Collaboration Council within the State of Maryland has developed its own Children's Agenda which has identified and agreed eight community outcomes to be achieved through collaborative partnerships.

#### ***High Complex Needs Strategy, New Zealand***

The New Zealand *High Complex Needs Interagency Strategy* (2005) is relevant because of its focus on cross-sectoral working with a central overarching objective to improve outcomes for children. This strategy involves three Ministries within the New Zealand government, namely, Health, Education and Social Development. It is specifically focused on improving outcomes for children and young people with identified high and complex needs, through effective inter-sectoral service collaboration. It has three goals:

- To foster collaboration to improve outcomes
- To improve effectiveness of inter-sectoral services
- To build sectoral capacity and capability.

#### ***National Program for Children and Youth at Risk, Israel***

Finally Israel's National Program for Children and Youth at Risk is a national inter-ministerial programme, led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services and is being implemented jointly with the Ministries of Education, Health, Immigration and Internal Security. The Programme aims to reduce the extent of risk situations among children and youth in seven areas of life.

## **4.4 Remit**

The six different jurisdictions considered for the purposes of this paper have broadly comparable organisational and accountability structures which often includes a national level steering group with members from government departments and agencies with statutory responsibility for the strategic delivery of the initiative.





The extent to which decision making is devolved to local level varies. In some cases a named full time programme director has been appointed at national and/or local level, with responsibility to co-ordinate and deliver on the strategic objective. Often programmes are then further sub divided into regional structures, and finally to local implementation groups, depending on the geographical location and the socio-demographic make up of the area. In Vermont for example 12 regional partnerships with populations of approximately 50,000 people have been established. Durham Children's Trust has five local children's boards divided based on identified areas of most severe socio-economic disadvantage. Each of these sub divisions has an appointed chair and/or director and in most jurisdictions training appropriate to the duties, skill set and responsibilities of the role is provided by the government department(s) with overall responsibility for the initiative.

Durham Children's Trust are explicit in stating that governance arrangements do not supersede or replace the statutory duties, constitutional or political governance arrangements of any partner organisation, but promote a culture of shared accountability within and between partners who are responsible to the Trust for outcomes and targets in their area.

## 4.5 Functions

The initiatives described all have clearly articulated outcomes to be achieved to improve the well being of children in their respective jurisdictions. Delivering on this requires:

- Conducting baseline socio –demographic data collection, needs analysis of the child population (in firstly the national or regional district, and secondly the local area), and prioritising the needs of its particular population
- Developing a child well being indicator set to measure achievement in respect of the identified outcomes.
- Developing action plans or children and young people's plans based on local needs analyses.

The establishment of sub groups to deliver plans and action priorities within the local implementation groups is common across the six jurisdictions.

Other roles and functions of programmes and initiatives vary to some degree but many include some or all of the following:

- Strategic planning for services including:
  - Agreeing joint priorities and targets
  - Strengthening decision making capacity at local level
  - Strategic joint commissioning
  - Determining funding arrangements
  - Influencing the allocation of resources across systems
  - Identification and cultivation of potential sources of funding
  - Resourcing priorities.



- Performance management
  - Ensuring partners are accountable for their role in delivering on action plans
  - Exercising power of veto when commissioned service or programme fails to meet requirements or is deemed to be ineffective
  - Research and evaluation of programmes and services.
  
- Working in partnership
  - Building local partnerships to co-ordinate services to eliminate fragmentation and duplication of services
  - Establishing new and innovative ways of working to deliver services more effectively
  - Capacity building across and within partnerships
  - Monitoring and reviewing standards of partnership working
  - Seeking and responding to the needs of stakeholders.

#### **4.6 Leadership**

Leadership is provided at national, regional, and local level through the designated chairs or programme directors. In many of the initiatives explored, and in speaking to those involved in implementation, it has become apparent that leaders or champions are appointed not necessarily based on their position within a government department or agency but more so on their identified skill and expertise in working with children, or their perceived knowledge and interest in specialist areas. Capacity building and training in leadership and other skills necessary to enhance abilities and skills to deliver on objectives is a key feature of most initiatives.

#### **4.7 Membership**

Membership of committees at regional and local level almost always includes representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and /or any party with responsibility for the delivery of services to children in a local area. However, there are certain stipulations regarding membership in operation in jurisdictions that require particular attention. In the Children's Trusts in England and Wales, for instance, The Children Act 2004 specifically identified a number of partners who are legally bound to co-operate and work together within the local authority. Recent statutory guidance (DCSF, 2010) has extended the original relevant partners and now includes:

- District Councils
- The Police Authority and Police Constabulary
- Probation
- Youth Offending Team
- Strategic Health Authority and local Primary Care Trusts
- Connexions (an information and advice service for young people aged 13 -19 years)
- Learning Skills Councils
- Schools



- Colleges
- GP services
- Job centres.

Further, the Trusts specify that individuals nominated as representatives need to have sufficient seniority to exercise the decision making powers of their organisation and to make collective decisions as part of the Children's Trust without necessitating referral back to their organisation or agency. This also applies to members of the High and Complex Needs Board in New Zealand, who must have seniority, delegated authority, service knowledge and credibility within their sector to exercise the decision making and leadership functions of a board member, and further must represent their sector's views while also taking a 'whole government' perspective.



**Table 2: Summary of key points from interagency initiatives in other jurisdictions**

## **4.8 Summary of key points from interagency initiatives in other jurisdictions**

### **Legislation**

- Where legislation exists, it clarifies the mandate and gives credibility and authority to programmes and initiatives

### **Outcomes**

- Interagency collaborations and partnerships have an outcomes focus to the planning and delivery of services

### **Universal and targeted services**

- Initiatives have a clear focus on either universal and /or targeted service provision

### **Accountability**

- There are clear lines of accountability at national, regional and local level
- In some jurisdictions, a designated programme director or co-ordinator provides strategic direction and focus
- Performance accountability for all partners is often an integral part of governance processes

### **Training**

- Training is provided for those involved in interagency collaboration, particularly for those in leadership roles. Training covers, for example, leadership, interagency working and programme implementation

### **Functions**

- Needs analyses is central to planning and delivering services at both national and local level
- Action plans are developed and include monitoring of delivery on these plans
- Indicators provide a mechanism for measuring achievement of outcomes

### **Funding**

- Interagency programmes and initiatives have the capacity to influence resource allocation and commissioning of services

### **Membership**

- Membership includes statutory, voluntary and community partners
- In some jurisdictions it is specified that members should be of sufficient seniority to represent their agency and to exercise decision making powers



## Section 5: Recommendations for Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

This section outlines recommendations relating to CSC governance, at national and local level.

It is envisaged that the recommendations, outlined below, should be discussed and decided on, by the NCSIG and relevant government departments and agencies.

### 5.2 Legislation

Many of the multi-agency initiatives similar to CSCs in other countries (referred to in Section 4) are underpinned by legislation. There is a strong case to be made for providing a legislative basis for CSCs but there are also risks associated with this route. The table below summarises the main advantages and disadvantages.

**Table 3: Advantages and disadvantages of enacting legislation**

Enacting legislation to underpin the CSC initiative	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Legislation would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the mandate of CSCs</li> <li>• Give CSCs legitimacy and create an imperative to action</li> <li>• Increase service provider awareness of the CSC initiative, creating support at local level for CSCs to be set up and increasing the transparency of the CSC initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation could delay the implementation of CSCs</li> <li>• CSCs could become yet another administrative structure at local level</li> <li>• Legislation could potentially be resisted by some stakeholders who would be obliged to comply with the legislation</li> </ul>

1. The NCSIG and the OMCYA should carefully reflect on the advantages and disadvantages associated with putting CSCs on a statutory basis, and the timing for the introduction of such legislation. Experience from other jurisdictions suggests that there is a **strong case to be made for legislation to underpin the CSC initiative, once the architecture is in place to govern and support CSCs at local and national level.**

Legislation would provide legitimacy and authority for CSCs and clarify their mandate. Its purpose should be to place a duty on statutory bodies to cooperate in improving outcomes for children, through CSCs at county / local level. The legislation should be simple and non-prescriptive. It could identify levers requiring statutory agencies to cooperate in planning and delivering services for children at county / local level. Guidelines on the functions and operations of a CSC could support the legislation.



2. Given that CSC's purpose is to secure better developmental outcomes for children in their area, through more effective integration of existing services and interventions, **CSCs should be authorised**, under the legislation, **to**:
  - Co-ordinate the implementation of national and regional policies and strategies, which relate to children, young people and families, in the area covered by the CSC
  - Plan and co-ordinate services for children in the area covered by the CSC, in order to improve outcomes for children
  - Eliminate fragmentation and duplication of services by ensuring more effective collaboration between children, young people and family services within the area
  - Influence the allocation of resources across the area covered by the CSC with a view to enabling the effective use of resources at local level
  - Strengthen the decision-making capacity at local level
3. CSCs should be accountable:
  - **At national level** – to the CSC Steering Group (described below in recommendation 9)
  - **At local level** – to the City / County Development Board
4. While legislation would clarify the mandate of the CSCs, **policy mechanisms** should also be used to provide legitimacy for the CSCs. For example, the important role to be played by CSCs should be reflected in the new National Children's Strategy and other relevant policy documents and strategies.

If a decision is made not to put the CSCs initiative on a statutory basis, policy mechanisms will be *the* key levers for requiring statutory agencies to cooperate with the CSC initiative.

### 5.3 National Level Governance

#### ***Mandate from parent Government Departments and Agencies***

5. There should be a clear **mandate from the very top** (at Cabinet / Secretary General level) which requires senior management in the relevant government departments and agencies to contribute to this national initiative at both national and local level. Senior management in the relevant government departments and agencies should communicate that participation in CSCs is a priority for their staff.
6. There should be commitment to, and ownership of, the CSC initiative among relevant **parent government departments and agencies**, including through their participation on the NCSIG and local CSCs.
7. The **strategic and business plans of relevant government departments and agencies** should reflect their role and involvement in CSCs.



### Leadership

8. The **National Children’s Strategy Implementation Group** should continue with the current membership.

The **mandate of the NCSIG** should include:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of the National Children’s Strategy and the achievement of the seven national outcomes.
- Developing Children’s Services Committees as a national initiative.
- Providing guidance to CSCs on significant strategic or policy issues arising across CSCs, including identifying major policy or political issues (in conjunction with the CSC Steering Group) which should be raised at the Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion (SOGSI).

9. A **CSC Steering Group, chaired by the OMCYA**, should be constituted at national level.

The **mandate of the CSC Steering Group** should be to:

- Operationalise the CSC initiative
- Identify and resolve major stumbling blocks at national level, and provide guidance to CSCs on significant operational issues arising across CSCs
- Co-ordinate information sharing between CSCs.

**Membership** of the CSC Steering Group should include:

- The Chairs of all CSCs
- 3-4 Local Authority Managers (who are involved in CSCs).

The CSC Steering Group should nominate two members to represent it, and the CSC initiative, on the NCSIG.

The CSC Steering Group should **report to the National Children’s Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG)**.

The CSC Steering Group may, from time to time, identify specific issues on which it needs **technical advice** relating to CSCs. When this occurs it should source expertise from specialists in the particular area.

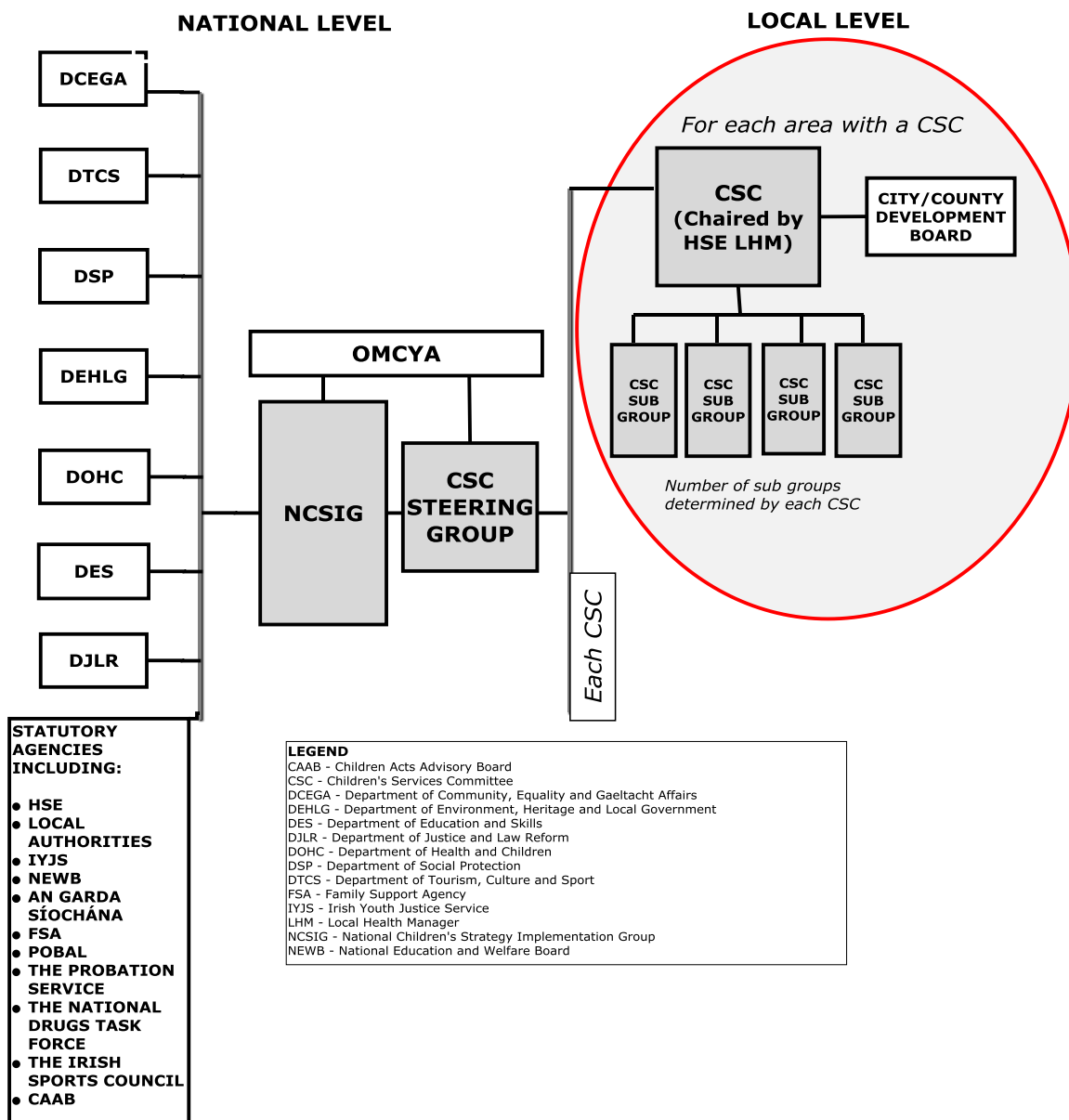


10. The **OMCYA** should provide **leadership** on the CSC initiative **at national level**, including providing support and guidance to the CSC Steering Group .

11. The **HSE** should provide **leadership** on the CSC initiative **at local level**, chairing each CSC and driving the development and implementation of CSCs at city and county level.

The diagram below provides an overview of the recommended governance structure for the CSC initiative.

**Diagram 1: Overview of Recommended CSC Governance Structure**







## 5.4 Local Level Governance

### *Functions*

12. CSCs should conduct the following activities:

- Bring together, and establish mechanisms for communication between, statutory and voluntary organisations involved in providing services to children in their area
- Conduct needs analyses relevant to the specified national outcomes for children and other relevant local issues
- Map the services currently available in their area
- Identify gaps and priorities in relation to population groups and services in their area
- Develop and oversee the implementation of an interagency plan designed to improve outcomes for children in their area
- Target resources and oversee service delivery of initiatives that will improve outcomes for children, and which require collaboration between services
- Create effective systems of co-ordinated services, support and opportunities to improve outcomes for children.

### *Remit*

13. CSCs should be established around **logical geographic areas** (such as a county or a particular part of a city).
14. Larger urban CSCs should establish **local implementation groups** for smaller areas / neighbourhoods. The local implementation groups should report to the CSC.
15. CSCs should explicitly adopt an approach which combines a ‘public health’ approach to **improving outcomes for all children** (universalism), with the **targeting of resources** on those that have special needs for support or protection. Such an approach is known as progressive universalism<sup>3</sup>.
16. CSCs should have the opportunity to influence funding decisions relating to services in the area, by considering proposed initiatives, programmes and services within the context of a plan for the area developed by the CSC

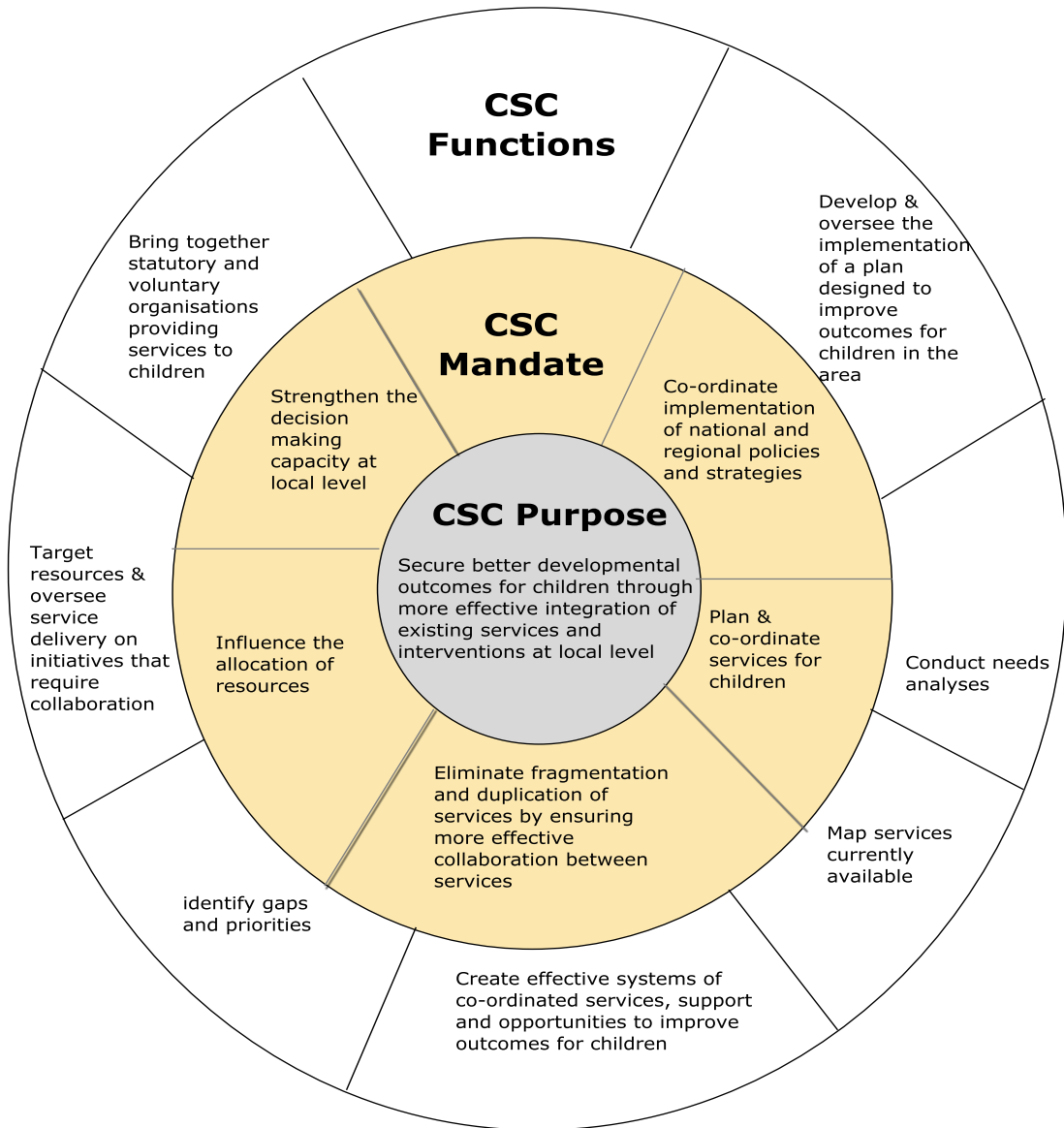
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<sup>3</sup> National Economic and Social Council (2005) *The Developmental Welfare State*, National Economic and Social Council, Dublin



An overview of a CSC's purpose, mandate and functions is outlined in the diagram below.

**Diagram 2: CSC's purpose, mandate and functions**



Source: Developed by CES and adapted from *Planning Brighter Futures for Children, Youth and Families; A Five Year Community Strategic Plan for Montgomery County, Maryland*, Montgomery Collaboration Council, 2006



### ***Leadership roles at local level***

17. **CSCs should be chaired by a senior manager from the HSE**, who has experience and expertise of working in children's services and with the authority and credibility to make and implement decisions (typically this will be a Local Health Manager). **The responsibilities of the Chairperson of the CSC** should include the following:
  - Provide leadership and direction for the CSC
  - Ensure that the CSC delivers on its plan / work programme
  - Ensure appropriate interaction between the CSC, the national CSC Steering Group and external stakeholders.
18. The City / County Manager from the Local Authority, who sits on the CSC, should act as **Deputy Chairperson of the CSC** and should deputise for the Chairperson of the CSC, when required.
19. Each CSC should appoint a **CSC Co-ordinator**, from within the existing resources of CSC member organisations.
20. Section four describes how other interagency initiatives have appointed full-time, programme directors to lead the initiative at both national and local level. The experience and expertise of the individuals in these full time roles (for example, in some countries they come from a social work or education background), can have a substantial impact in terms of the pace of implementation. Putting in place **experienced staff, in a dedicated role, to drive forward the initiative** at national and local level should be explored as an option by the NCSIG, OMCYA and the HSE.

### ***Membership***

21. In order that the CSCs can address issues relating to the seven national outcomes for children, **senior managers from all of the major statutory and voluntary providers of services to children and families should be represented on the CSC**. Membership of each CSC could include representatives from the following:
  - The HSE
  - The Local Authority
  - The Department of Education and Skills (formerly the Department of Education and Science)
  - The National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB)
  - The Vocational Educational Committee (VEC)
  - The Probation Service
  - An Garda Síochána



- The Department of Social Protection (formerly the Department of Social and Family Affairs)
  - The local Childcare Committee
  - Key voluntary and community organisations providing services to children, families and young people in the CSC's area.
22. Each Government Department and agency should decide how they can best ensure representation on each CSC. Senior managers appointed to each CSC **should have sufficient knowledge and authority to represent their Department and agency on the CSC and to exercise decision making powers.**



## Section 6: Key Documents

Bell, Stephen (2002) *Economic Governance and Institutional Dynamics*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Australia

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) *Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on cooperation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan*

Department of Health and Children (2000) *National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives*, Dublin: The Stationery Office

Department of the Taoiseach (2007) *Towards 2016: Ten-year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015*, Dublin: The Stationery Office

Department of Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Every Child Matters in County Durham – Children's Trust Governance Arrangements*

Department of Health (UK) *Children Act 2004*, HMSO, London

Ministry for Social Affairs (2010) *Israel's National Programme for Children and Youth at Risk* State of Israel Ministries of Social Affairs & Services Education Health Immigrant Absorption International Security

Montgomery County Collaboration Council (2006) *Planning Brighter Futures for Children, Youth and Families, A Five Year Community Strategic Plan for Montgomery County*, Maryland, 2007 – 2012

National Economic and Social Council (2005) *The Developmental Welfare State*, National Economic and Social Council, Dublin  
New Zealand Ministry of Social Development & Ministry of Health, Child, Youth & Family (2007) *Protocol between the Ministries of Health, Education & Social Development for the High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy*

Northern Health and Social Services Board (2008) *Northern Ireland Children's Services Plan, 2008 – 2011*

OFMDFM [Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister] (2006) *Our children and young people – our pledge: a ten year strategy for children and young people in Northern Ireland 2006–2016*

OMC (2007) *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook*, Office of the Minister for Children Dublin: The Stationery Office

OMCYA (2009) *Working Together for Children* Leaflet

OMCYA (2010) *Strategic Plan for the Development and Implementation of the CSC Initiative*