



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE *WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN* INITIATIVE

**National Children's Strategy Implementation Group
and Children's Services Committees**



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the *Working Together for Children* Initiative

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) (formerly the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs), the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG¹) and the Children's Services Committees (CSCs) have been leading an initiative to develop a planning model for national and local interagency working to improve outcomes for children. This is collectively known as the *Working Together for Children* initiative.

The objective of the *Working Together for Children* initiative is to secure better developmental outcomes for children through more effective integration of policies and services.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) provides leadership for this initiative at national level and the Health Services Executive (HSE) provides leadership at local level.

The *Working Together for Children* initiative has been developed and influenced by three major Government policy documents, *The National Children's Strategy* (2000), the ten-year Social Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016* (2006) and *The Agenda for Children's Services: A policy handbook* (2007).

The National Children's Strategy

The National Children's Strategy² (2000) sets out the vision of an Ireland "where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential".

The strategy seeks to establish a "whole child" perspective at the centre of all relevant policy development and service delivery. An inclusive view of childhood is adopted to assist with the identification of children's needs and approaches best equipped to meet these needs through the empowerment of families and communities in general.

The strategy sets out **three National Goals** which reflect the context of children's lives today and the "whole child" perspective. The three National Goals are:

1. Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity
2. Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services
3. Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development.

Towards 2016

Towards 2016, the 10 year social partnership agreement, provides an overarching framework to address key challenges that individuals face at each stage of the lifecycle. It includes a specific focus on the needs of children and young adults. Key areas to be addressed in relation to children, from the perspective of the lifecycle approach, include early childhood development and care, improving education outcomes, improving health outcomes, promoting recreation, sports, arts and culture, income support and children and their families.

Towards 2016 states:

"At a local level a multi-agency Children's Committee will be established within each of the City/County Development Boards. These Committees will be chaired by the HSE who are best placed to drive this initiative to achieve coordinated and integrated services."

¹ The functions of the NCSIG are outlined in Section 3.1 of this Governance Framework

² Department of Health and Children (2000) *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives*. Dublin: Stationery Office

The Agenda for Children's Services

*The Agenda for Children's Services*³, published in 2007 by the Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, sets out the strategic direction and key goals of public policy in relation to children's health and social services in Ireland. *The Agenda for Children's Services* draws together the various types of outcomes found in contemporary children's policy and presents them as a single list of 7 National Service Outcomes for Children in Ireland. These are:

1. Healthy, both physically and mentally
2. Supported in active learning
3. Safe from accidental and intentional harm
4. Economically secure
5. Secure in the immediate and wider physical environment
6. Part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community
7. Included and participating in society.

This provides a single framework for the relevant Government Departments and agencies in all policy considerations and services related to children and families.

1.2 Definition of governance

Governance 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. It also refers to the process of decision making.

In this Governance Framework, we define governance as the principles and processes by which an initiative is overseen and regulated.

1.3 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to articulate the governance arrangements for the *Working Together for Children* initiative. This Governance Framework is derived from existing policy and legislative provisions, and from the consideration given by the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (the national group with responsibility for driving the *Working Together for Children* initiative at national level) to the following documents:

- Learning from experience to inform the future – Findings emerging from the initial phase of the Children's Services Committees (Centre for Effective Services, 2010)
- Draft Paper Outlining Recommendations Relating to the Governance of Children's Services Committees (Centre for Effective Services, 2010).

1. The governance arrangements for the Working Together for Children initiative do not supersede or replace the statutory duties or individual constitutional governance arrangements of any partner organisation. They are designed to provide a practical framework to enable partners to co-operate so as to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.
2. All stakeholders in the Working Together for Children initiative need to be cognisant of the potential impact of both the HSE and VEC restructuring on the initiative and the effect of early retirements and redundancies. The DCYA will work with stakeholders in the initiative to try and ensure continuity during this period.
3. As agreed by the NCSIG, this Governance Framework will be reviewed after one year.

³ Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2007) *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook*. Dublin: The Stationery Office

2. NATIONAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE

2.1 Legislation

There is a significant body of legislation in place which supports co-operation between key partners and sharing of information. The NCSIG will work to clarify and maximise the potential use of the existing legislative provisions to ensure they underpin the work of the NCSIG and the CSCs. Some useful existing provisions include, for example:-

Health Act, 2004

Section 7 (5) (b)

In performing its functions, the Executive [HSE] shall have regard to:

The need to co-operate with, and co-ordinate its activities with those of, other public authorities if the performance of their functions affects or could affect the health of the public.

Family Support Agency Act, 2001

Section 2 (b)

The Agency [FSA] in performing its functions shall have regard to the need for cooperation with other relevant public authorities and voluntary bodies.

Section 4 (c)

The functions of the Agency [FSA] include supporting, promoting and developing the provision of marriage and relationship counselling and family support services, and,

Section 4 (d)

to promote and disseminate information about issues in relation to marriage and relationships education, family mediation, parenting and family responsibilities and related matters and in this regard to co-operate with other public authorities in providing information to assist persons in balancing their work and family responsibilities.

Local Government Act 2001

Section 129 (5) (d)

The functions of a Board [CDB] are:

To encourage and promote on an ongoing basis the co-ordination of the activities of the bodies and interests represented on the Board and co-operation generally between such bodies and interests so as to optimise resources and combined effort for the common good of the community.

Education Act, 1998

Section 6

Every person concerned in the implementation of the Act shall have regard to the following objects in pursuance of which the Oireachtas has enacted this Act:

(g) to promote effective liaison and consultation between schools and centres for education, patrons, teachers, parents, the communities served by schools, local authorities, health boards, persons or groups of persons who have a special interest in, or experience of, the education of students with special educational needs and the Minister.

Section 22 (2) (c)

The principals and teachers shall collectively promote cooperation between the school and local community (community not defined).

Next steps

The NCSIG and DCYA will now consider (i) the potential to take advantage of Ministers' powers to make regulations under some provisions and (ii) the potential to further enhance provisions in legislation already committed to or being drafted.

Further legislative requirements to underpin the *Working Together for Children* initiative will also be considered as part of the process. In the meantime, the focus is on putting in place the architecture to govern and support CSCs at local and national level within the existing legislative framework.

2.2 Policy mechanisms

The majority of public service providers take their mandate from both legislative and policy provisions. A number of policy mechanisms, referred to above, currently provide the key levers for statutory agencies co-operating with interagency working both locally and nationally. The NCSIG will seek to further embed interagency working as a key feature in policy development at national 'sector' level as well as within individual partner organisations. It is clear from the work to date that local actors look to the relevant policy frameworks or organisation strategies to seek the mandate they require to participate in this initiative.

As senior managers within their respective organisations, each member of the NCSIG should therefore ensure that they provide input regarding the importance of supporting interagency working into key policies as the opportunity arises.

National Children and Young People's Strategy

The new National Children and Young People's Strategy will provide an opportunity to further strengthen and embed the mandate of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group, CSCs and interagency working.

Statements of Strategy

In accordance with the Public Service Management Act 1997, each Department and relevant Offices are now required to prepare a revised Strategy Statement for the three year period 2011-2013. Each member of the NCSIG should ensure that supporting interagency working generally and actively supporting the NCSIG and CSCs is incorporated into their organisations Statement of Strategy.

Business and corporate plans of Government Departments and Agencies

The strategic and business plans of relevant Government Departments and agencies should reflect their role and involvement in the NCSIG and CSCs.

The embedding of support for the *Working Together for Children* initiative through these policy mechanisms will be monitored and evaluated by the DCYA on behalf of the NCSIG.

2.3 Principles

The six principles which underpin the National Children's Strategy also underpin this Governance Framework. These are:

- ➔ **Child Centred:** the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration and the children's wishes and feelings should be given due regard
- ➔ **Family Oriented:** the family generally affords the best environment for raising children and external intervention should be to support and empower families within the community
- ➔ **Equitable:** all children should have equality of opportunity in relation to access, participation in and derive benefit from the services delivered and have the necessary levels of quality support to achieve this. A key priority in promoting a more equitable society for children is to target investment at those most at risk
- ➔ **Inclusive:** the diversity of children's experiences, cultures and lifestyles must be recognised and given expression
- ➔ **Action Orientated:** service delivery needs to be clearly focused on achieving specified results to agreed standards in a targeted and cost-effective manner
- ➔ **Integrated:** measures should be taken in partnership, within and between relevant players be it the State, the voluntary/community sector and families; services for children should be delivered in a co-ordinated, coherent and effective manner through integrated needs analysis, policy planning and service delivery.

These principles already guide much of the work of public bodies working in children's policy development and service delivery.

The following three principles relating to good governance also underpin this governance framework:

- ➔ **Accountability:** all organisations are accountable, that is, answerable for decisions relating to their policy and practice
- ➔ **Transparency:** There are clear roles and responsibilities and clear procedures for making decisions and exercising power
- ➔ **Efficiency:** All Departments/agencies have a responsibility to ensure the best use of resources to secure better developmental outcomes for children, young people and their families and will demonstrate a commitment to evidence-based strategies for improvement.

3. NATIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

3.1 National Children's Strategy Implementation Group

Mandate

The NCSIG is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the National Children's Strategy and the achievement of the national outcomes for children. The NCSIG is also responsible for developing CSCs as a national initiative and for providing guidance to CSCs on significant strategic or policy issues arising across CSCs, including identifying major policy or political issues which need to be addressed.

NCSIG members are drawn from a number of Government Departments and statutory agencies. Each member has specific responsibilities and mandate in relation to their role in their 'parent' organisation. NCSIG members also have responsibilities associated with being a member of the NCSIG. In balancing individual mandates and their role on the NCSIG, members should act in a manner which demonstrates their commitment to the *Working Together for Children* initiative. This should include:

- Providing leadership for the initiative within their organisations and sector
- Ensuring better coordination of services, achieving sensible collaboration and avoiding duplication of effort

Accountability

As well as individual accountability of members to their respective Ministers or Boards, the NCSIG is collectively accountable to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

Functions

The functions of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group are:

- To support the development and implementation of the new National Children and Young People's Strategy
- To support the further development and effectiveness of multi-agency Children's Services Committees within the City/County Development Board Structure as envisaged in the Strategic Plan⁴
- To provide leadership and support to the implementation of integrated services and interventions for children at local level including providing an ongoing link between locally based service management and delivery and national level policy and resource planning
- To support mainstreaming of evidence based practice including practice emerging from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme, and other innovative programmes.

Responsibilities of individual members of the NCSIG

Individual members of the NCSIG are responsible for:

- Representing their organisation on the NCSIG
- Representing the NCSIG in their organisation and in other fora
- Working collaboratively with other members of the NCSIG to lead this national initiative
- Committing to driving forward the development of CSCs in their organisation as appropriate
- Encouraging the establishment of at least 20 CSCs by 2012
- Embedding interdepartmental, cross-agency and multidisciplinary ways of working within their organisation
- Promoting and influencing a long-term vision of working effectively to improve outcomes for children
- Influencing Government, senior policy makers and services providers in relation to all of the above
- Supporting the DCYA with the development of the National Children's and Young People's Strategy and other specific cross-sectoral commitments.

⁴ Strategic Plan for The Development and Implementation of the *Working Together for Children* Initiative (NCSIG, 2010)

Chair

The National Children's Strategy Implementation Group will be chaired by the Director General of the DCYA.

Membership

All Government Departments and State agencies that develop policies or deliver services that affect children and young people are represented on the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group. These are:

- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- The Department of Health
- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- The Department of Education and Skills
- The Department of Justice and Equality
- The Department of Social Protection
- The Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
- The Health Service Executive
- Local Authorities
- The Family Support Agency
- The Probation Service
- National Educational Welfare Board
- An Garda Síochána
- Pobal
- The Irish Sports Council.

3.2 CSC Steering Group

Mandate

The CSC Steering Group will support the practical implementation of the Children's Services Committees.

Accountability

The CSC Steering Group is accountable to and will report to the NCSIG.

Functions

The CSC Steering Group will:

- Operationalise and support the development of the CSCs
- Identify both the local needs and obstacles facing the Children's Services Committees
- Provide guidance to the CSCs on significant operational issues across all CSCs
- Seek requisite supports for CSCs
- Co-ordinate information sharing across CSCs.

Responsibilities of individual members of the CSC Steering Group

Individual members of the CSC Steering Group are responsible for:

- Providing leadership and direction for the initiative at national and local level
- Ensuring appropriate interaction between their CSC, the CSC Steering Group and NCSIG
- Representing their CSC on the CSC Steering group
- Promoting their CSC at national level
- Promoting and influencing a long-term vision of working effectively to improve outcomes for all children
- Influencing Government, senior policy makers and service providers in relation to the development and driving forward of the initiative
- Reporting on their CSC's achievements, challenges, obstacles and emerging trends
- Identifying needs and seeking requisite supports
- Contributing to learning for CSCs at local level and for the national initiative
- Mediating and managing information sharing between the CSCs, CSC Steering Group and the NCSIG.

Chair

The CSC Steering Group will be chaired by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Membership

The membership of the CSC Steering Group should include:

- The chairs of all CSCs
- 3-4 Local Authority Managers (who are members of CSCs)
- 2 representatives of CSC co-ordinators selected by their network. The 2 CSC coordinators chosen by their network to represent all coordinators on the Steering Group will serve a fixed term of 12 months. After 12 months the CSC coordinator network will be asked to nominate 2 new representatives to the Steering Group.

Membership of the CSC Steering Group will be kept under review as the number of CSCs continues to grow.

The CSC Steering Group will nominate two members to represent it, and the CSCs generally, on the NCSIG. The two CSC Steering Group members chosen to represent the Group on the NCSIG will serve a fixed term of 12 months. After 12 months the CSC Steering Group will be asked to nominate 2 new representatives to the NCSIG

4. LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE

4.1 County/City Development Board

Mandate

County Development Boards (CDBs) were established in 2000 as a Government response to the challenge of better integration of public and local service delivery. They have statutory underpinning by virtue of Section 129 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

4.1 County/City Development Board

Accountability

The Local Government Act, 2001, Section 129 (2) states 'A Board shall operate under the aegis of the relevant county council or city council, but is otherwise independent in the performance of its functions'.

Individual agencies are accountable to the CDB and their national agency/own Department in relation to the work of the CDB. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government also has an overall leadership/monitoring and support role in respect of the work of the Boards. Under section 129(7) of the 2001 Act, the CDBs shall have regard to Government policy and shall comply with any general policy directives given to it by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Administrative support for the CDBs is provided via the relevant county/city council and local government is represented on the Board by the Council's Corporate Policy Group and the county/city manager.

Functions

The main function of the CDBs is to bring about the more co-ordinated delivery of public and local development services at local level via implementation of an agreed strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the county/ city and the community.

Chair

The Boards are chaired by a local authority elected member. They are serviced from within the county/city councils by Directors of Service for Community and Enterprise and their staff.

4.2 Children's Services Committee

Mandate

CSC's are responsible for securing better developmental outcomes for children in their area, through more effective integration of existing services and interventions. This will be achieved by:

- Co-ordinating the implementation of national and regional policies and strategies, which relate to children, young people and families, in the area covered by the CSC
- Planning and co-ordinating services for children in the area covered by the CSC, in order to improve outcomes for children
- Eliminating fragmentation and duplication of services by ensuring more effective collaboration between children, young people and family services within the area
- Influencing the allocation of resources across the area covered by the CSC with a view to enabling the effective use of resources at local level
- Strengthening the decision-making capacity at local level.

Accountability

At local level, each CSC is accountable to the City/County Development Board. At national level each CSC is accountable to the NCSIG and the DCYA.

Functions

The functions of the Children's Services Committee are to:

- Develop and oversee the implementation of an interagency Children and Young People's Plan, designed to improve outcomes for children in their area by completing the following:
 - a. Conducting needs analyses relevant to the specified national outcomes for children and other relevant local issues
 - b. Mapping the services currently available in their area
 - c. Identifying gaps and priorities in relation to population groups and services in their area
- Put in place monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the Children and Young People's Plan
- Bring together, and establish mechanisms for communication between, statutory and voluntary organisations involved in providing services to children in their area
- Support national initiatives that involve children and young people in decision making on the development and delivery of children's services.

Remit

- CSCs should be established around **logical geographic areas** (i.e. county/city council areas)
- 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 universalism⁵.

Responsibilities of individual CSC members

Individual members of the CSC are responsible for:

- Ensuring their organisation/Department/agency is represented on the CSC, contributes to its work and meets its commitments in the Children and Young People's Plan
- Promoting their CSC at local and national level, and within their own organisation
- Driving forward the work of their CSC
- Embedding interdepartmental, cross-agency and multidisciplinary ways of working within their organisation
- Promoting and influencing a long-term vision of working effectively to improve outcomes for all children
- Influencing Government, policy makers and service providers in relation to all of the above
- Targeting resources, by exercising their influence, responsibility or authority over resources allocated by their own organisation/Department/agency, where it is possible and appropriate.

Chair

The HSE Local Health Manager will chair the CSC. The role of Deputy Chair will be filled by a Local Authority nominee. Each CSC should appoint a CSC Co-ordinator from within the resources of CSC member organisations. There is additional guidance available in **Appendix A** on these individual roles.

Membership

Each CSC will have senior managers from all the major statutory providers of services to children and families in order that the CSC can address issues in relation to the seven national outcomes. Members will be of sufficient seniority to represent their agency and to exercise decision making powers. Membership should include representatives from the following:

- The HSE (Chair)
- The Local Authority (Deputy Chair)
- The Education Sector
- (which could include for example, a representative from the Department of Education and Skills, The National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB), National Educational Psychological Assessment (NEPS) and the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC))
- The Probation Service
- An Garda Síochána
- Social Inclusion Partners (including for example, the Family Support Agency)
- The County Childcare Committee

⁵ National Economic and Social Council (2005) The Developmental Welfare State, National Economic and Social Council, Dublin.

In situations where any of the above or other relevant organisations, such as the Department of Social Protection, are not represented, liaison arrangements should be put in place to ensure that there are opportunities to source requisite expertise or information in order to ensure timely access to data or information sources as may be required.

Voluntary or community organisations including, for example, large providers of services to children, families and young people in the CSC's area or organisations with a cross cutting remit such as partnership companies and family resource centres should be invited to become members of the CSC. Membership of the CSC should be determined by the contribution or influence an agency/organisation can have on the planning, funding prioritisation or alignment of services within the county.

Subgroups

CSCs should establish sub-groups centred on the national outcomes for children and the priority actions which the CSC is trying to achieve under each outcome. CSCs may also find it useful to establish a subgroup dealing with specific issues associated with interagency working such as data protection, information sharing etc. As regards subgroup membership, CSCs may find it helpful to invite the following groups to participate: county childcare committees, youth justice teams, local community development programme groups, youth committees in VECs, HSE teams, voluntary youth organisations etc. (See Appendix A).

Diagram: Summary of CSC's purpose, mandate and functions



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

5. OTHER ISSUES

5.1 Reconciling Conflicts⁶

The *Working Together for Children* initiative brings together partners with a common responsibility to work together to improve outcomes. However, there must be an acknowledgement that occasionally competing agendas can present difficulties.

Each partner is responsible for ensuring that they play their part in developing and delivering on the Children and Young People's Plan. The over-riding principle remains that partners cannot act contrary to their statutory duty. Tensions and differences may arise between partners in working together to determine how best to achieve this. Where differences arise within groups, the first step to resolution should be focused on discussion to achieve consensus.

Within a Children's Services Committee (CSC), partners are individually and jointly responsible for achieving the outcomes and targets contained within the Children and Young People's Plan. Many partners also have a series of duties in relation to their specific roles and responsibilities within the children's agenda which cannot be compromised by decisions made by the CSC. No single partner within the CSC has precedence over another; however there are considerable differences in the statutory responsibilities that need to be discharged by partners. These must be respected when determining any course of action to be taken by the CSC. On those occasions where conflict in determining a course of action does arise, the primary objective will be to resolve the matter through consensus. Every effort must be made to reach consensus as conflict within the committee will be detrimental to the ability to improve outcomes.

In the event that consensus cannot be achieved locally, the matter may be referred to the CSC Steering Group as its core functions include identifying obstacles facing CSCs and providing guidance on significant operational issues. When an issue has not been resolved either locally or at CSC Steering Group level, it may be referred to the NCSIG for advice and guidance.

Decisions taken by the CSC cannot override those of a parent organisation in particular the CSC cannot require any partner to act in a way contrary to their statutory responsibility. The needs of children, young people and their families are paramount.

5.2 Funding Decisions

CSCs should seek to influence rather than control funding decisions. The most important means of influencing decisions is for agencies to ensure that the priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan are reflected in or are a reflection of corporate business plans within the partner organisations. CSCs should not make funding decisions which are the prerogative of individual agencies and for which individual agencies remain accountable. In exceptional circumstances (including at the request of the NCSIG) and where the issue is directly relevant to the Children and Young People's Plan, the CSC may decide that it is appropriate to make a joint decision, at CSC level, in relation to the following:

- Assessing applications for funding locally or nationally
- Facilitating joint bids for national level funding schemes
- Endorsing applications for funding.

Agencies should consult with CSCs and the Children and Young People's Plan on issues relating to planning of children and family services. As stated above, there is an onus on partners to ensure that their own organisations' plans reflect commonly agreed priorities as in the Children and Young People's Plan.

5.3 Reporting Arrangements

CSCs are required to report to the DCYA, the CSC Steering Group and the CDB as illustrated in Appendix B. In order to reduce the administrative burden the DCYA has asked the Centre for Effective Services to develop a standardised reporting template.

⁶ Some agencies have their own policies in relation grievance procedures such as the *Grievance and Monitoring Policy Document* developed by the Support Agency Network and the Family Resource Centre National Forum, May 2006

5.3.1 Reports to the DCYA

CSCs will provide the DCYA with an annual update on their Children and Young People's Plan. For those CSCs in the pre-implementation phase, there will be ongoing bilateral dialogue with the DCYA regarding general progress.

5.3.2 Reports to the CSC Steering Group

Children's Services Committees with a Children and Young People's Plan will report quarterly to the CSC Steering Group on the following areas:

- Identification of their needs to support and promote the initiative collectively and individually
- Operational issues
- Information sharing
- The Implementation of the Internal Communications Strategy at local level and on emerging communications needs.

The CSC Steering Group provides a forum to discuss these issues and to decide which issues require a national focus and should be brought to the attention of the NCSIG. DCYA will also use this forum to inform CSCs about key developments and initiatives which are relevant to the development and implementation of Children and Young People's Plans.

5.3.3 Reports to the CDB

It is anticipated that the County/City Development Boards will also be updated with the Children and Young People's Plan, quarterly reports and the annual update.

A diagram illustrating reporting arrangements within the *Working Together for Children* initiative is outlined in Appendix B.

5.4 Supports for the process

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will support and run meetings of the National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG) and the CSC Steering Group. The DCYA will chair both of these groups and provide the secretariat which will include the following:

- Agree agenda items for the meetings
- Develop and disseminate papers relating to agenda items
- Co-ordinate feedback on any agenda items
- Respond to requests that require a national focus
- Monitor the implementation of the initiative.

The DCYA will also oversee the implementation of the "*Strategic Plan for the Development and Implementation of the Working Together for Children initiative*" and report to the NCSIG on progress made. Subject to funding, the DCYA will:

- Provide facilitation support for CSCs
- Provide general advice and support to CSCs
- Identify, undertake and oversee the development of key tools to support the work of CSCs, the CSC Steering Group and the NCSIG (e.g. Toolkits, Templates etc.)

Centre for Effective Services

The Centre for Effective Services (CES) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded jointly by philanthropy and Government in Ireland. They are assisting the DCYA in the development of the Working Together for Children initiative. CES will work with the DCYA to develop mechanisms to support the CSCs as they set up and develop their work. In the context of the first Strategic Plan⁷ this means:

- Developing an evaluation strategy for CSCs
- Identifying the technical and organisational assistance needs of CSCs
- Providing ongoing support and assistance to CSCs
- Disseminating knowledge and learning from the initiative
- Producing an 'operating guide' to inform the implementation of CSCs.

⁷ Strategic Plan for the Development and Implementation of the *Working Together for Children* initiative, 2010

APPENDIX A

Roles and Responsibilities

Chair of a CSC

The role of Chairperson of the CSC should be held by the Local Health Manager (LHM) of the HSE. The key responsibilities of the Chairperson are to:

- Provide leadership and direction for the Committee
- Chair meetings of the Committee and manage the proceedings
- Ensure the effectiveness of the Committee in all aspects of its role
- Take a lead role in determining and reviewing the process regarding the composition, structure and performance of the Committee
- Ensure that the Committee undertakes a thorough analysis of all issues and concerns
- Exploit the knowledge of Committee members and ensure active participation and contributions during all meetings
- Ensure that all members of the Committee have access to accurate, timely and relevant information
- Ensure that the Committee develops and implements a Children and Young People's Plan for the County
- Participate in the CSC Steering Group.

Deputy Chair

The local authority representative is the deputy chair of the CSC and their main responsibility is to support the Chairperson in carrying out their responsibilities. The deputy chair should deputise for the Chairperson of the CSC, when required.

Co-ordinator

Each CSC should appoint a Co-ordinator from within the existing resources of CSC member organisations. The key responsibilities of the CSC Co-ordinator include:

- Communicate a clear sense of purpose and direction on behalf of the Committee
- Foster and develop relationships with key personnel including committee members and other stakeholders within associated agencies/service providers involved in the provision of child and family services
- Ensure the collection, provision and reporting of relevant data and information
- Respond to ad hoc information requests and manage external correspondence as necessary
- Organise and administer meetings of the CSC and its subgroups.

Sub group Chair and Membership

It is envisaged that an appropriate CSC member will be nominated to chair each sub group. Each sub group Chair should have expertise in that specific area and is expected to provide leadership and direction to the sub-group. The sub-group structure provides the opportunity to include additional people outside of the main CSC group such as practitioners, front line staff, people from the voluntary and community sector involved in direct service provision in the area.

APPENDIX B

A diagram illustrating reporting relationships within the *Working Together for Children* initiative may be found on the next page. Please refer to Section 5.3 for further detail on reporting arrangements.

