**Short Report on the
Implementation Workshop for**
Children and Young People's Services Committees:
How well are you implementing?

An Implementation workshop for Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) was held on 11th February 2015 at the St Andrew's Resource Centre in Dublin. It was attended by 59 individuals from across 21 CYPSC and representatives from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The workshop was organised by the Centre for Effective Services (CES) and was designed to provide an introduction to the field of 'Implementation' to CYPSC Chairpersons, CYPSC members and CYPSC Co-ordinators. The workshop heard from practitioners with national and international expertise including Allison Metz, Co-Director at the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), USA. CYPSC members were asked to apply the learning with their CYPSC colleagues to consider how their county's CYPSC is working.

The objectives of the day were to:
- To develop a common understanding of 'Implementation Science'
- To explore implementation concepts in relation to CYPSC alongside CYPSC members from other counties
- To consider how each CYPSC can apply the learning for better implementation
- To reflect on how Implementation Science can be applied to each CYPSC member's *'day job'*

The day began with a welcome and introduction from Colma Nic Lughadha, National Co-ordinator for Children and Young People's Services Committees. Katie Burke, Senior Manager and Stella Owens, Project Specialist from the Centre for Effective Services provided an introduction to Implementation Science and presented on the different stages of implementation. CYPSC members then participated in roundtable group discussions on the stage of implementation that their Committee is at. They were asked to consider:
1. **What stage of implementation is your CYPSC at?**
2. **What aspects of the context in which your CYPSC is working are:**
    a. **Enabling**
    b. **Most challenging**
3. **What activities should your CYPSC undertake to move to the next stage of implementation?**

Following the group discussions, each CYPSC reported back what stage of implementation they consider their committee to be at. In some cases committees have moved through implementation stages 1 to 4 and then back to stage 1 again while their activities or programmes may be at implementation stage 4. This committee-stage phenomenon was thought to be predominantly due to membership churn within a committee. Each table then shared a point of learning from the exercise. The following learning observations were made:
- Implementation is not necessarily a straight line. There is complexity in locating committees on the implementation spectrum as different parts of a committee's work are at different implementation stages.
- Take a "slow and steady" approach, constantly evaluating and if necessary look at re-grouping.
- Often the focus is on the committee itself rather than the work emanating from the committee.
- The importance of leadership - each outcome for children and young people has to have a lead agency.
- The importance of the CYPSC Co-ordinator in supporting the committee work to move forward.
- The mandate for member organisations to come to the committee table so that CYPSC work is integrated into each member organisation's own plans; encouraging participation and accountability.
- The importance of "buy-in" by organisations to support the early establishment of the committee.
- The need for resources at this early stage.

In the afternoon Allison Metz, Katie Burke and Stella Owens presented on Implementation Drivers and Allison Metz discussed Co-creating Implementation Infrastructure. Following this, a second CYPSC roundtable group discussion occurred. CYPSC were asked to consider the following questions:
1. **Which of the Competency Drivers are most relevant to the work of your CYPSC?**
2. **What is your experience with Organisation Drivers to date, in the context of your CYPSC?**
3. **Leadership is required at multiple levels for effective interagency collaborative working. What could your CYPSC do to enhance the Leadership Driver?**
4. **Role Clarity - Are your CYPSC members and stakeholders clear about their roles?**
5. **Call to Action - What are the 2 things you will urge your CYPSC to do, after today's workshop?**

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An Roinn Leanaí
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1

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Following this second roundtable discussion opportunity, attendees were invited to ask questions of the panel of speakers during a plenary session. The panel consisted of Katie Burke, Stella Owens and Allison Metz. This session was chaired by Colma Nic Lughadha. A summary of the plenary session is included here:

> *Is there a cycle in the process of implementation, in terms of people going back and forward on a continual basis?*
> *"Yes, it is a recursive process, due to politics and new pieces/programmes/innovations of work being developed all of the time; and the implementation process needs to facilitate this. However there should be elements of workforce development and infrastructure that are rooted and set in stone in the organisation. If this infrastructure is solid it will enable this recursive process to go much smoother."*

> *Is there value drawing on the experiences of people who were on the "older committees"?* *"Yes, there is. Horizontal learning should be your focus over the next 12-18 months, keeping in mind the challenges of time and geographical spread. There needs to be a space for sharing, learning and developing evidence and going on to share that evidence and experiences with your fellow CYPSC."*

> *The importance of clarity in the implementation system - How important is it and how do you keep the clarity?*
> *"Role clarity is quite important and it matters throughout the implementation process because of a tendency for some to apply a 'hand-offs' approach or because there can be changes in roles during the process."*

> *How important is the 'glue' between local CYPSC, government departments and others who are also involved?* *"The 'glue' between all stakeholders is important. For example the new CYPSC website (www.cypsc.ie) is one part of the 'glue' to assist knowledge exchange and information sharing. We need co-ordination, collaboration and communication between all involved and to include all of the moving parts involved in the CYPSC e.g. Local Community Development Committees, Tusla etc. The reconfiguration of the CYPSC National Steering Group is another facet of the 'glue' now fitting under the structures of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures National Policy Framework for Children and Young People."*

> *The increase in age range of the CYPSC brings with it some reservations, in terms of how to incorporate this cohort effectively and efficiently:* *"Aligning structures across the whole spectrum will take time – there needs to be significant consideration on how to respond to this cohort. Each locality will prioritise for their CYPSC."*

> *Observation from attendee: "Going forward when any changes or decisions are being made there needs to be a surety that they are made within a collaborative process. One that mirrors a process like this event - that highlights the importance of interagency working."*

The workshop closed with Allison Metz providing her reflections on the day and practical tips for implementation. Here are Allison's closing thoughts for CYPSC:

- Come up with small wins and don't underestimate them. Think about something that is 'do-able' in a 1-3 month period. Small things we can do to improve competency and organisational drivers. Low risk, low cost and reversible.
- Always consider PDSA cycles in your Committee's work – Plan, Do, Study, Adjust. Are you rolling out these cycles with fidelity? A lot of the time change only happens when it's in a reaction to something; try to anticipate change by collecting data and let change be an intentional activity for the better.
- Identify your successes and keep record of them. Where was the success and why? This can help in replicating innovations/programmes etc. When did people come together and it actually worked? Ensure that there is time spent in celebration and reflection on your successes and share this with your fellow CYPSC members.