Developing a Successor to Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024

REPORT ON FORUM OF CYPSC COORDINATORS, LEARNINGS AND REFLECTIONS, 16/10/2025

Presented to:
Department of Children, Disability & Equality and Tusla – Child and Family Agency

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Developing a Successor to *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024*: CYPSC Coordinators Learnings and Reflections Forum Report

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I take full responsibility for any inaccuracies and errors and the views expressed in this report do not represent the views of CYPSC, DCDE or Tusla - Child and Family Agency.

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List of abbreviations / glossary of terms

CES	Centre for Effective Services
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committees
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability Equality
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Youth (previous name of DCDE)
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs (previous name of DCDE)
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCSP	Local Community Safety Partnership
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
Mentimeter	Online interactive survey tool
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSG	National Steering Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
Tusla	Tusla - Child and Family Agency

Executive Summary

Overview

This report presents the outcomes of the CYPSC coordinators Forum held in Dublin on 16th October 2025. The day was made up of two parts: the morning session was devoted to a presentation and discussion on fundings of an external review of CYPSC undertaken by the Centre for Effective Services (CES). The afternoon session was externally facilitated and consisted of a participatory workshop on reflecting on the learnings from *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024* and exploration of some of the priorities for the next phase.

Morning Session: Presentation of the review of CYPSC

In 2023, DCDE commissioned CES to undertake a review of CYPSC. The review examined the CYPSC under seven key themes, with 42 recommendations made. The morning session featured a presentation by the CES on their external review of CYPSC, commissioned by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The CES Review highlighted ongoing challenges in governance, resourcing, and integration with national policy. Recommendations from the discussion afterward included strengthening governance structures, improving awareness and engagement, enhancing workforce planning, and clarifying CYPSC's distinct role among interagency bodies.

Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024: Reflections from consultation

The afternoon workshop provided CYPSC coordinators with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences implementing *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024* and to discuss priorities for the next strategy. The session focused on practical challenges, achievements, and aspirations for the future.

There was an overall sense of optimism and positivity about the future of CYPSC and the potential for feeding into the next stage in a collaborative way. The CYPSC coordinators engaged in a lively and interactive discussion and recognised key strengths of *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024* and how it had been implemented, along with some ongoing challenges, reflections on changes and suggestions for the next phase.

Key strengths identified included enhanced interagency collaboration, improvements in local planning, and the development of a shared framework for action. Increased funding and new project support roles were welcomed. There were ongoing challenges noted such as governance and decision-making structures, funding arrangements, and the visibility of CYPSC's role at both local and national levels.

Key themes identified

- **Stronger national coordination and clearer structures** are needed to support leadership, accountability and links between local and national levels.
- **More consistent, multi-annual funding and adequate staffing** are required to support delivery and reduce reliance on short-term or fragmented resourcing.
- **Better alignment with local and national planning frameworks** is needed, while maintaining CYPSC's distinct role.
- **Increased awareness and clearer communication of CYPSC's role** are needed across stakeholders and government structures.
- More meaningful and consistent approaches are required to ensure **young people's voices influence decision-making**.
- **The next strategy should be co-designed**, with clear priorities, roles and a stronger focus on implementation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report sets out the findings of a consultation with CYPSC coordinators on their reflections on the policy roadmap for CYPSC in Ireland – *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024.*

The consultation was held in person in Dublin on 16th October 2025, and all CYPSC coordinators were invited. Officials from Tusla – Child and Family Agency and the DCDE were also in attendance. Further to a presentation by CES, a representative from DCDE spoke about *The Children and Young People's Policy Forum, established under Young Ireland (DCDE, 2023) which includes representation from CYPSCs.*

1.2 Children and Young People's Service Committees

CYPSCs have been established in Ireland since 2007, with full national coverage achieved in 2017. They are local, multi-agency structures established to plan and coordinate services for children and young people (0–24 years) with the aim of improving outcomes through collaborative working across statutory, community, and voluntary sectors. (CYPSC, 2025) They play a key role in realising the national outcomes set out in *Young Ireland National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023 - 2028* (DCEDIY, 2023).

A **national coordinator** for CYPSC is located in Tusla, Child and Family Agency, with a close collaboration with DCDE to provide leadership and strategic direction for CYPSC at a national level and lead the implementation of the strategic plan for CYPSC. There are **27 local CYPSCs** in Ireland, broadly broken down by county with five in the Dublin region and there are currently three local CYPSCs covering two counties (Longford/Westmeath, Sligo/Leitrim and Laois/Offaly). Each CYPSC supported by a **local CYPSC coordinator**, based within a local Tusla, Child and Family Agency office.

1.3 Structure of report

This report focuses mainly on the findings from the afternoon workshop, along with a summary of some relevant points from the morning session that fed into the workshop. The report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: This sets out a brief background context, including *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024,* its mid-term review and the external review of CYPSC. It contains a brief overview of some of the content and discussion of the morning session, which fed into further discussion in the afternoon workshop.

Section 3: Findings of reflective workshop on moving on from *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024* .

Section 4: Summary and conclusions

2. Context

2.1 *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019–2024*

The roadmap for the development of CYPSCs has been outlined in *Shared Vision, Next Steps: 2019-2024 (*DCYA, 2019). It sets out a vision to consolidate the positive work to date and to use CYPSC infrastructure and intelligence of inter-agency working to create the optimum circumstances to advance local and national priorities to enable effective systems change in local communities. It sets out a clear model of interagency working and governance and a series of actions under a range of headings, including areas such as participation of children and young people; data and evidence; leadership and collaboration.

A mid-term review was published in 2023 (DCEDIY, 2023) and found good overall progress, with 60% of actions having been implemented, but noted that some actions remain outstanding, pointing to the need for further emphasis on resourcing, consistency, and embedding the infrastructure at local and national levels.

2.2 CES Review of CYPSC

In 2023 DCDE commissioned the Centre for Effective Services to undertake a broader external review of CYPSC. This review examined CYPSC across seven thematic areas and made 42 recommendations. Key messages included strengthening governance structures, improving awareness and engagement; enhancing workforce planning; and clarifying CYPSC's position within the broader landscape of interagency bodies. Since the review was undertaken several developments have occurred, including

- The introduction of project support roles for each CYPSC
- The establishment of new governance mechanisms offering greater opportunities for CYPSC to feed into national policy process, such as the Children and Young People's Policy Forum under Young Ireland (2023).

2.3 Discussion of CYPSC review – relevant findings for afternoon workshop

After the CES presentation on the findings from their review of CYPSC, a facilitated group discussion took place. CYPSC coordinators were invited to reflect on the CES Review and share their feedback. Some of the discussion identified opportunities that would shape the afternoon workshop discussions. Some of the points from the discussion identified as relevant for the afternoon consultation are outlined below. These points provided shared context and informed the afternoon workshop.

Strategic direction and framework

In line with the CES Review's recommendations, there was a call for a robust strategic framework, underpinned by a fully resourced implementation plan and a five-year funding cycle to enable long-term planning. Coordinators proposed that the strategy should be co-produced and agreed by all main stakeholders, including CYPSC Coordinators, and should contain a refreshed, clear statement of purpose.

Leadership and Governance

Coordinators identified the absence of the National Steering Group (NSG) as a critical gap. A desire was expressed to have clearer communication of these processes of how the CYPSC local voice feeds into the national level and vice versa. There was also a desire for a universal reporting structure for all funding sources and for greater clarity and accountability at both national and local levels.

Funding and resourcing

Coordinators agreed with the CES findings regarding inconsistent resourcing. Coordinators highlighted the need for CYPSC to be resourced on a par with other structures such as Local Community Development Committee (LCDCs) and Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSPs). Multi-annual funding and permanent posts within partner organisations who receive CYPSC funding were seen as crucial for effective delivery. It was noted that funding alone is not sufficient for partner organisations; it must be accompanied by adequate staffing to manage and support delivery.

Interagency collaboration and community development

The community development ethos of CYPSC was widely praised for building trust across the sector. While interagency collaboration was acknowledged as strong, there was a call for further strengthening, particularly in interdepartmental work. The strategy should foster opportunities for agencies to work well together in service of children, young people, and families. There was also a suggestion to move beyond Memoranda of Understanding between Tusla and DCDE and develop a national approach to strengthen coherence between partnership structures.

Visibility, awareness, and strategic role

The coordinators agreed with the CES findings that low levels of awareness and understanding of CYPSC's role existed amongst stakeholders.

Local planning and integration

There was a clear need for CYPSC to be included in county plans and local strategic planning groups.

Risks and opportunities

Tusla manages the implementation and coordination of the CYPSC. However, the CYPSC initiative is a government strategy and as such must remain connected to all relevant government departments and agencies. There is a risk of CYPSC being diluted within broader local structures if not properly integrated and resourced nationally.

Implementation and next steps

Coordinators called for a fully resourced implementation plan and involvement at the highest levels of government.

3. Consultation

3.1 Agenda & overview of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop with CYPSC coordinators was to provide an opportunity for CYPSC coordinators to reflect in more detail on the implementation of *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024*, to discuss ongoing challenges, and collectively shape priorities to inform its successor. The workshop was marked by open discussion, critical reflection, and a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.

The atmosphere throughout the workshop was open, constructive, and future-focused. Coordinators engaged actively with the process, sharing diverse experiences of working with *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* and expressing a strong commitment to shaping the development of its successor. The discussion from the morning session naturally resurfaced, helping to frame the group conversations and guide the collective exploration of the next phase of CYPSC development.

Overall, participants agreed that interagency collaboration and local planning have strengthened, but highlighted ongoing challenges around governance, funding, development of strategy and policies and visibility.

The agenda for the workshop was:

- Welcome & Overview by Lara Hynes, Assistant Secretary, Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division, DCDE
- Introduction by Sheila Kulkarni, Assistant Principal Officer, Parenting Support Policy Unit, DCDE
- Ice breaker, introduction to *Shared Vision Next Steps (2019*-2024) and its implementation (with use of Mentimeter)
- Small Group work on moving forward.
- Feedback & discussion

3.2 Initial reflections

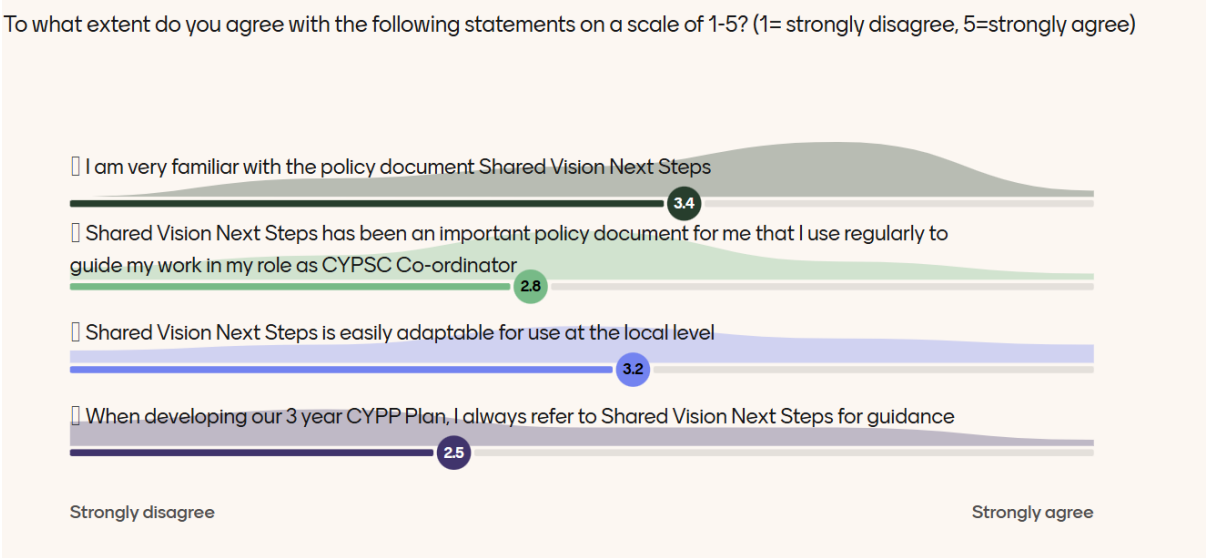
Participants were asked to reflect on how they feel about the future of CYPSC after the morning session and in general. This was done using Mentimeter™, from which a Word Cloud was generated. The words used were generally positive, with the words 'positive', 'optimistic', 'hopeful' and 'excited' appearing the most frequently. The Word Cloud below is weighted with larger text for the more frequently mentioned words.

Figure 1 Wordcloud of how Coordinators feel about the future of CYPSC.

3.3 Implementation of *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* & how it was used in practice

A series of questions were posed on Mentimeter™, with participants asked to reflect on the extent to which *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* was a living document that they used regularly in their work. As show below, the coordinators expressed a relatively high level of familiarity with the document (3.4 average on scale of 1-5) and most felt it was easily adaptable at the local level. Lower scores were provided for the statement *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024 has been an important policy document that I use regularly* (2.8); and *When developing our 3 year plan, I always refer to it for guidance* (2.5).

Figure 2 Results of questions on use of *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024*



Coordinators shared a range of perspectives on the impact and effectiveness of the *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* . Overall, the **document was widely regarded as a helpful starting point**, particularly for new coordinators, offering a clear framework and guidance.

A final Mentimeter question was posed as *Can you name up to 3 things that went well in the implementation of Shared Vision Next Steps?*

The results included the following:

- Guidance framework and useful document to share to **define what is CYPSC** (x3)
- Very **helpful** for starting the CYPSC Coordinator role (x2)
- Strengthened **Interagency Collaboration** & provided interagency framework (x2)
- Provided **additional resources** e.g. project support (x2)
- Contributed to **emergence of shared language** across county CYPSCs
- Promoting **quality and evidence informed** work
- **Delivery** of Local Children and Young People's Plans
- **Voice of young people**
- **System leadership** by coordinators worked well
- Lovely **colours**
- Plan with **support of Dept and launch by Minister** gave it a high profile

- Document **endorsed CYPSC work**
- It did **set out a plan**, but the implementation was weak
- Defines **different types of coordination** and collaboration

In the discussion, several challenges were also identified, such as:

- A **lack of clear leadership** and ownership led to a dilution of strategic focus.
- Implementation often relied on **informal relationships** rather than formal structures and accountability.
- Over time, the **absence of senior leaders in local CYPSC structures** was felt to have weakened the strategic drive.

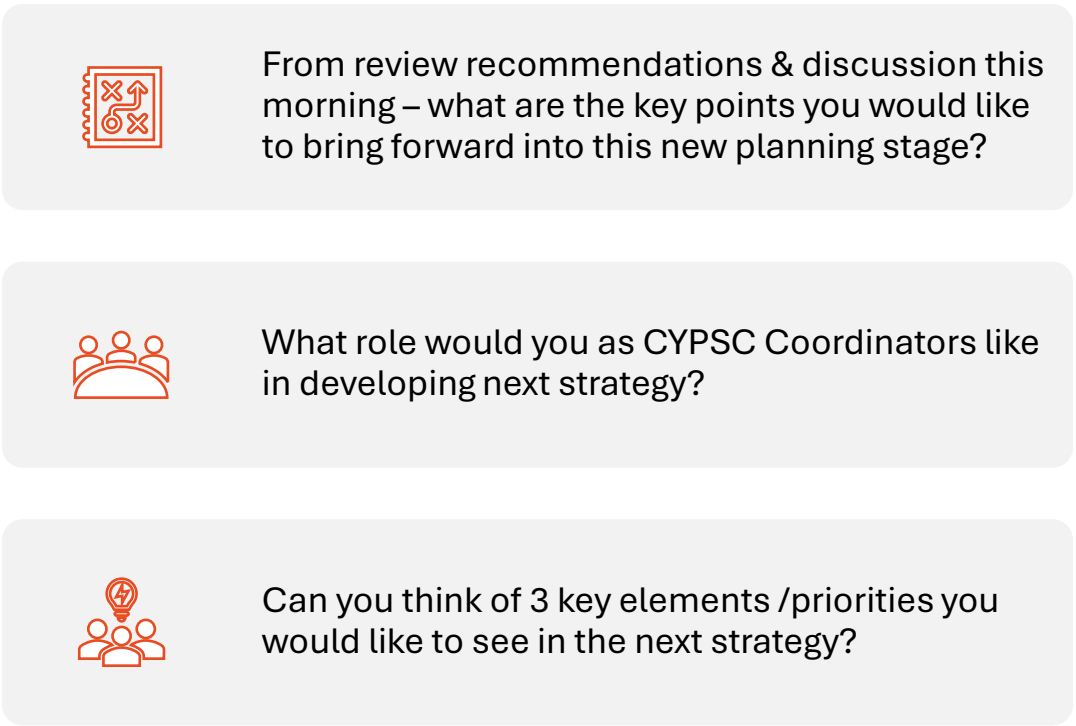
These insights provided an important foundation for the subsequent groupwork discussions, where Coordinators considered the implications of their experiences for the next planning phase (see Section 3.4)

3.4 Groupwork on moving to next planning phase

The CYPSC Coordinators were then divided into three groups and asked to consider the questions in the figure below.

The analysis of the feedback is therefore organised thematically, highlighting the key themes presented by each of the groups and discussed in the ensuing whole group discussion. In certain areas, the workshop discussion clearly aligned with the morning session.

Figure 3 Groupwork questions



Additional questions posed in the discussion after feedback included:

- How do you think the **CYPSCs can play a stronger role** in influencing national policy for children and young people in the future?

- **What mechanisms** could be used to do that and how would voices of each CYPSC be included?
- Do you think there are ways in which **CYPP (Children and Young People's Plans)** could be better streamlined with county and national policy processes?
- How could voices of children and young people be strengthened in the CYPSC process?

The findings of these group discussions are organised thematically below. It should be noted that there was not a consensus on all issues and there was a breadth of opinions on certain points.

Governance, policy influence, and national structures

A recurring theme from the workshop discussion was the need to address gaps in **governance and national policy influence**. Several participants mentioned that there does not always appear to be a structure leading it – reflecting that '*No-one was leading it – felt like it felt short on being driven, implemented*' and '*A disconnect developed – not clear where our line of sight was'.*

Key Points Raised included:

- Earlier local CYPSC structures had more senior leaders – which later became diluted
- The **disbandment of the National Steering Group** (NSG) was viewed as a critical loss by some, reducing CYPSC's ability to influence policy at national level. The discussion on this topic evolved and there was an appreciation of the different ways in which CYPSC Coordinators can feed into national policy processes.
- The potential for **feeding into the Children and Young People's Policy Forum** was discussed, as a way to allow the DCDE to bring policy issues to different government departments and **involve senior officials** from relevant government departments to ensure that CYPSC is viewed as a cross-departmental initiative.
- It was also suggested that it could be useful to put representatives from different CYPSC areas on **national working groups** on specific topic.
- Current mechanisms, such as the **Implementation Group** and National **Network Days**, were viewed as positive, but insufficient substitutes for a dedicated national steering structure.
- **It was proposed that Renewing the Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) between the Department of Children, Disability and Equality and Tusla, could maintain CYPSC's cross-departmental identity and strategic relevance.

Funding, resourcing, and reporting

Funding and resourcing were highlighted as persistent barriers to effective delivery of the CYPSC Initiative, both at local and national levels.

It was noted that **CYPSCs have responsibility for the co-ordination of Healthy Ireland programmes** for children and young people and a Healthy Ireland Implementation structure has been established. A review of Healthy Ireland is currently being undertaken, with the findings potentially influencing the future role of CYPSC in that funding stream.

A discussion was also held on the **role of CYPSCs as a strategic initiative** and its role in supporting innovative pilot initiatives through project based funding mechanisms, with a risk of it being viewed as funding led and losing sight of its strategic focus. Concern was raised that some organisations engaged with CYPSC solely for access to funding that CYPSC can provide.

Key Points Raised included:

- **Short term funding cycles**, along with the resulting uncertainty in staff employment across partner agencies were viewed as barriers to sustainable service delivery and long term planning.
- **Multi-annual funding** from CYPSC was identified as essential for sustaining momentum in programme implementation and maintaining service delivery.
- The **administrative burden** on CYPSC coordinators of managing multiple funding sources was noted.
- **The increase in DCDE funding** announced in Budget 2026 would provide an additional €10,000 for each CYPSC. This is very welcome in addition to the recruitment of the project support roles.
- A **universal funding reporting structure** to streamline processes and enhance transparency was recommended.
- **Resource allocation for CYPSC** should be on a par with comparable structures such as LCDCs and LCSPs, as highlighted in the CES Review.

Integration with Local Planning and Strategic Alignment

The integration of CYPSC with other local planning structures was also discussed as a way of providing greater synergies and avoiding duplication. The integration of CYPSC plans into other county-level planning frameworks was discussed extensively, including Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) etc. This was also identified in the CES review and has also been referenced to in the recent OECD reviews of structures for improving outcomes for children and young people and policy making as a whole (OECD, 2024; 2025).

Some coordinators advocated for incorporating the CYPP within LECPs to reduce duplication of work, whilst others cautioned against the risk of CYPSC's work being diluted if subsumed within broader plans. It was agreed however that greater alignment and integration needs to happen and timeframes should be more aligned.

Key Points Raised

- **Align the timeframes** of all relevant local plans to improve coherence and synergy.
- **Move CYPP to a five (or six) year framework** in line with other structures such as LECP, LCDC.
- **Share of resources and knowledge across all plans to avoid duplication**. It was noted e.g. that each plan contains a socio-economic profile and it would be more efficient to streamline this across all plans, whilst also aligning the timing.
- Ensure that CYPSC's unique contribution is safeguarded within local planning structures.

National positioning of CYPSC

Despite nearly two decades of operation, it was agreed awareness and **understanding of CYPSC's role remain low both nationally and locally**. Some felt that the document for the *Development of CYPSC 2015- 2017* (DCYA, 2015) and *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* (DCYA, 2014) had a higher profile. Some also spoke to Tusla's primary responsibility for the welfare, and protection of children and that as a consequence CYPSC can be viewed as less significant or urgent in contrast to this.

It was recognised that there have been key delivery partners in many areas that are very committed to the CYPSC model and they often have limited budgets. The potential of naming Family Resource Centres (FRC) as a key delivery partner was suggested by some, but others noted that they are not in all areas and other community organisations play a crucial role.

Key Points raised included:

- The development of a **standardised booklet to explain CYPSC's** purpose and functions, which could be available for each CYPSC to distribute. This could include a one page infographic to demonstrate the reach of CYPSCs.
- Develop an **induction model** for new CYPSC committee members
- **Organise annual or biannual showcase events** to highlight achievements and raise the profile of CYPSC nationally.
- **Improve communication** within the CYPSC network and with external partners to build support and engagement.
- **Redevelop the CYPSC national website** and provide a repository of good practice case studies from various local CYPSC initiatives.
- Provide **sufficient resources and expertise** at national level to resource this work.

Children and youth participation

The involvement of children and young people in CYPSC structures was recognised as both a challenge to undertake in a meaningful way and an opportunity to strengthen their voice. It was noted by some that it can be tokenistic to have one young person on a CYPSC committee or sub-group. However, young people who were in a such a position often responded that they valued being there.

Positive examples were provided that enabled youth participation in diverse ways, not just by having young people on committees. These included implementation of the Lundy model of participation (Lundy, 2007) that recognises the four domains of *Space, Voice Audience and Influence* that requires more in-depth processes.

Participants spoke of examples also where policy makers and people in authority sometimes wanted to sanitise or edit what young people were expressing, but it was important to stay true to their message. Another youth participation initiative suggested was the Planet Youth initiative, trialled in some areas in Ireland such as its use in CYPSC planning in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.[1]

Key Points raised:

- Diversify mechanisms for **meaningful child and youth involvement** and provide sufficient resources to do so.
- Ensure that young people's voices are genuinely integrated into decision-making processes.

Proposed next steps

In signing off on *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024*, it was agreed that its successor should have a clear and actionable implementation plan supported by a communication plan to raise awareness at both local and national levels, with defined roles, responsibilities, and ownership. The coordinators proposed the following actions for the Department and the CYPSC National Office to consider when developing the successor:

- **Adopt a co-design approach**, involving Coordinators and stakeholders. The first step in involving coordinators in the presentations and workshops at this event was welcomed.
- **CYPSC planning and implementation should be cross-departmental**. It is important to build relevance and awareness across government departments

[1] See Planet Youth West | Galway, Mayo & Roscommon

- Any **consultation process should include a survey of stakeholders** and it would be useful to develop one survey that could be sent to all, to avoid duplication and allow for comparison across CYPSC areas.
- Develop a **robust communication plan** at both local and national levels to ensure alignment and shared ambition.
- Agree a **clear vision for CYPSC**, to provide strategic direction and reinforce cross-departmental collaboration.
- Develop a **matrix style management structure for CYPSC** to leverage CYPSC expertise and efficiently manage CYPSC by assigning a CYPSC coordinator as national lead to a number of key national meetings or for specific issues. A matrix management style is a flexible organisational structure designed to enable better collaboration across different functions, projects, or geographical locations within an organisation.
- Examine the **feasibility to develop a space at regional level** where they could bring issues that are more local/ regional and tease them out at that level. It was commented that the national coordinator meetings can sometimes involve detailed discussions that could be held more effectively at a regional level. It would also help to feed issues from a regional level into national level discussions. This would not necessarily need to be a formalised structure.

4. Conclusion

The CYPSC coordinators consultation provided an opportunity for meaningful and lively engagement, with honest and constructive feedback provided whilst also recognising what is working well.

CYPSC coordinators engaged thoughtfully and enthusiastically, sharing both achievements and ongoing challenges, and expressed a clear willingness to contribute to the development of the next phase. Overall, *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* was viewed as a positive framework for the implementation of the CYPSC initiative and participants expressed a sense of optimism for the future.

Key strengths identified included enhanced interagency collaboration, improvements in local planning, and the development of a shared framework for action. Increased funding and new project support roles were welcomed. There were ongoing challenges noted such as governance and decision-making structures, funding arrangements, and the visibility of CYPSC's role at both local and national levels. Some of the perceived challenges also related to issues of communication and awareness of decision-making processes and the role of oversight at a national level. The discussion was marked by a strong sense of partnership, interagency collaboration and a desire for greater involvement in shaping future policy at national level.

The feedback gathered during the workshop offers practical insights that may inform the next phase of CYPSC, with coordinators expressing a strong desire to be consulted and involved in the development of the successor to *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024* .

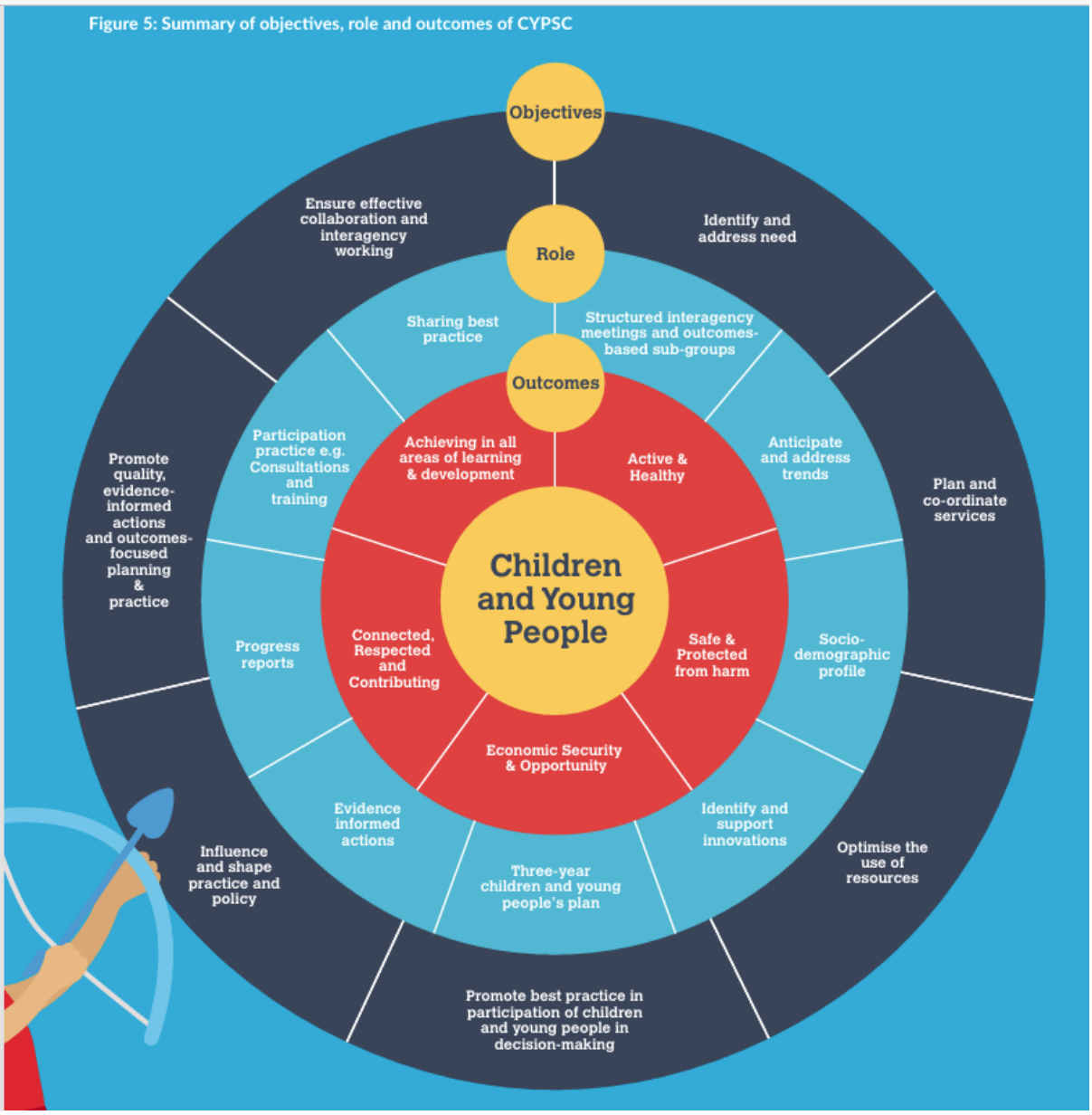
A number of key points emerged

- **Consider strengthening governance structures** and providing clearer communication of such processes, particularly in relation to how local CYPSCs feed into national structures.
- **Seek greater alignment and integration of CYPSC plans** with other county-level frameworks, while safeguarding the unique contribution of CYPSC.
- **Enhance communication and awareness of CYPSC's role**, possibly through standardised materials, induction models, and showcase events.
- **Diversify and strengthen mechanisms for meaningful youth participation**, ensuring that young people's voices are genuinely integrated into decision-making.
- **Adopt a co-design approach** with Coordinators and other stakeholders.

Overall, the CYPSC Coordinators expressed ownership and commitment to the CYPSC model. Their reflections demonstrate a clear vision for how the next phase of CYPSC can build on existing strengths while addressing identified challenges, ensuring that CYPSC continues to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people, both at local and national levels.

APPENDIX

Figure 4 Summary of objectives, roles and outcomes of CYPSC from *Shared Vision Next Steps 2019-2024*



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