Interagency Working to Improve Outcomes – A No Brainer!
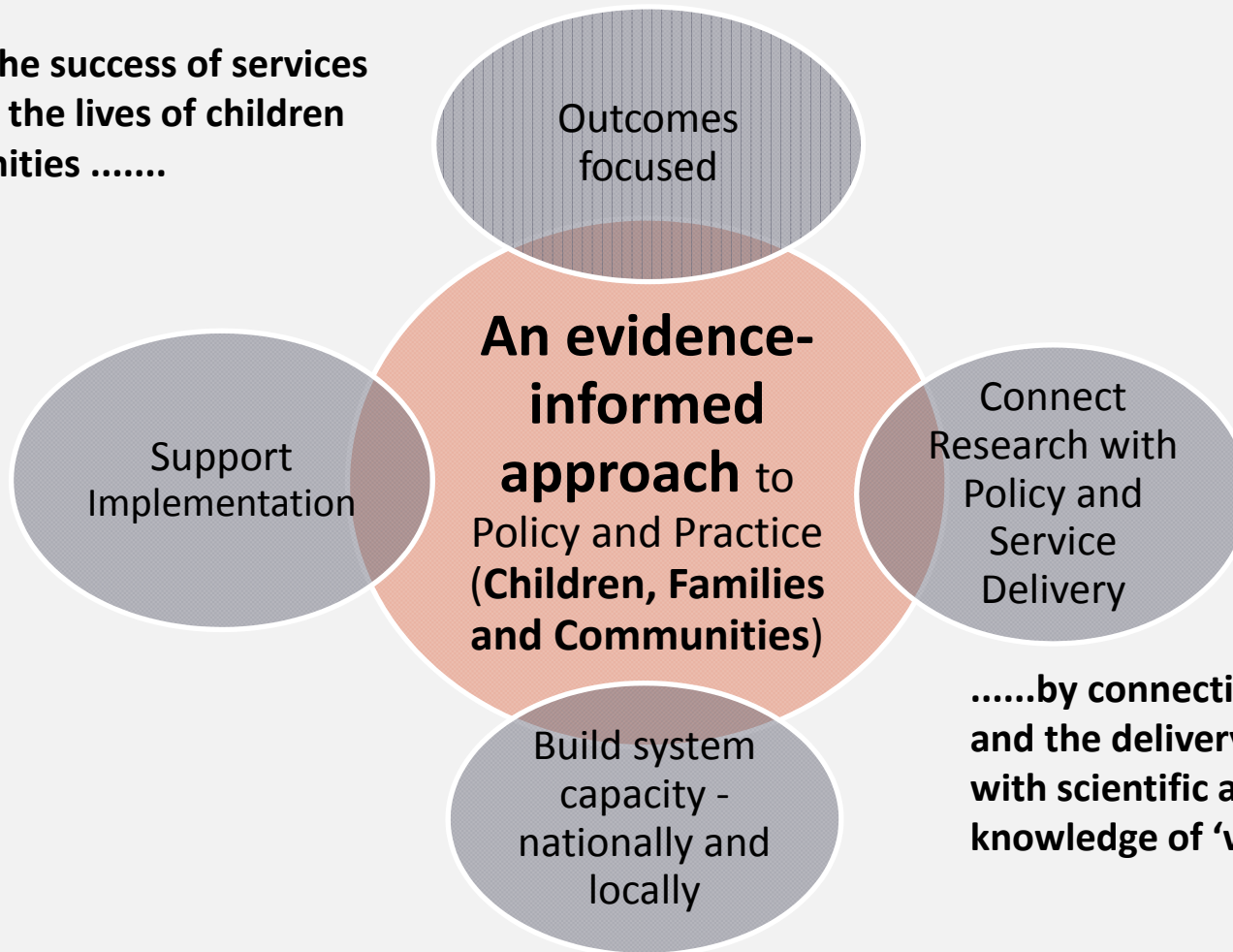
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Centre for Effective Services

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Croke Park

Purpose of CES

Our mission
To increase the success of services in improving the lives of children and communities ....

Outcomes focused

Support Implementation

An evidence-informed approach to Policy and Practice (**Children, Families and Communities**)

Connect Research with Policy and Service Delivery

Build system capacity - nationally and locally

......by connecting the design and the delivery of services with scientific and technical knowledge of 'what works

What do we mean by Evidence?

Evidence-based
A programme, service or intervention that has consistently been shown to produce positive results by independent research studies that have been conducted to a particular degree of scientific quality.

Evidence-informed
Practice based on the integration of experience, judgement and expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research.

A Review of International Evidence on Interagency Working . .

- Commissioned by CES on behalf of OMCYA (now DCYA)

- Research conducted by Professor June Statham, Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education in London

- Rapid literature review

Levels of Partnership Working

Four levels of partnership working (Frost, 2005), starting with the least joined up:

Co-operation: services work together toward consistent goals and complementary services, while maintaining their independence

Collaboration: services plan together and address issues of overlap, duplication and gaps in service provision towards common outcomes
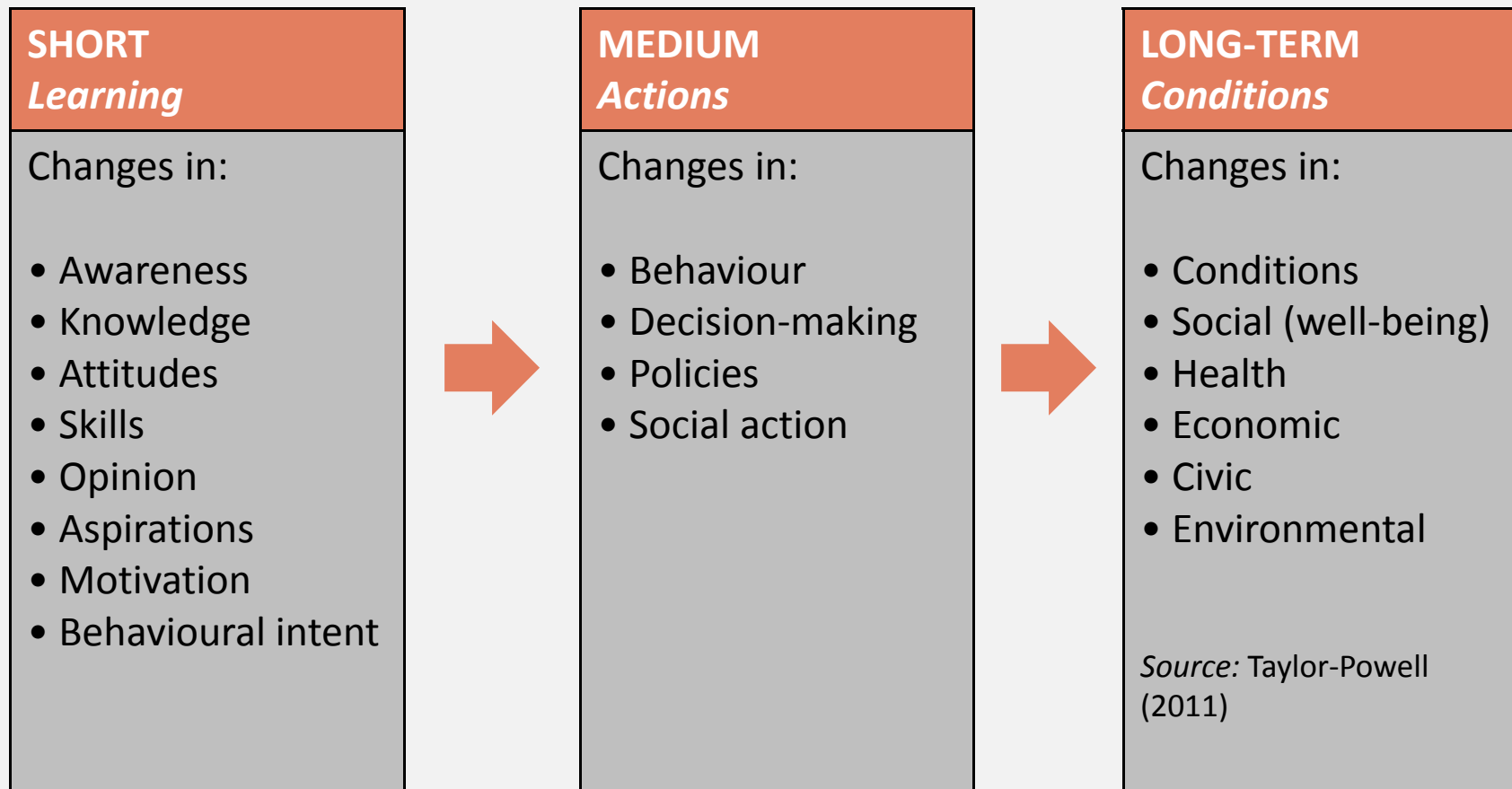
Coordination: services work together in a planned and systematic manner towards shared and agreed goals

Integration: different services become one organisation in order to enhance service delivery

What do we mean by Outcomes?

- Outcomes are the changes for service users or other targets of change, that happen as a result of an intervention or service being provided

- The outcomes of an intervention identify what is hoped to be accomplished. Outcomes may be intended or unintended, and positive and negative

- Outcomes fall along a continuum from immediate (initial; short-term) to intermediate (medium-term) to final outcomes (long-term), often synonymous with impact

A Chain of Outcomes

SHORT
Learning

Changes in:

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Opinion
- Aspirations
- Motivation
- Behavioural intent

MEDIUM
Actions

Changes in:

- Behaviour
- Decision-making
- Policies
- Social action

LONG-TERM
Conditions

Changes in:

- Conditions
- Social (well-being)
- Health
- Economic
- Civic
- Environmental

Source: Taylor-Powell (2011)

Levels of Impact of Interagency Working

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) England - four stage model of levels of impact of interagency working processes:

Level 1: Changes to inputs/processes such as the introduction of new tools and management structures

Level 2: Changes to routines, experiences and practices of practitioners and service managers (based on professional perceptions)

Level 3: Changes to outcomes for children, young people and families

Level 4: Institutional/systematic embedding of the changes across organisations

Impact of Interagency Working on Outcomes

- Common theme in the literature is the difficulty in finding evidence to demonstrate the impact of interagency working on children and young people, due to:
    - Different levels of interagency working
    - Defining and measuring outcomes
    - Attribution
- Most research evidence relates to changes in processes, experiences and practice
- Widely acknowledged that interagency working takes time to become established and it is unrealistic to expect early evidence of measurable impact (important to measure 'steps on the way')

Impact of Interagency Working on Outcomes

Where evidence of the impact of interagency working does exist, it is mostly positive

For service users	For professionals	For agencies
• Improved access to services and speedier response • Holistic approach leading to more seamless services • Improved outcomes e.g. child able to remain at home, improvements in attainment	• Improved enjoyment and well-being in their working lives • Enhanced knowledge and understanding of other professional roles • More opportunities for personal and career development and skill acquisition	• Greater efficiency and greater involvement with service users • Less duplication

Challenges to Interagency Working

Contextual barriers/political climate

- changes in political steer

- financial uncertainty

- a climate of constant organisational change

- agency boundaries not co-terminous

Organisational challenges

- different agency policies, procedures and systems

- agencies have different remits and do not collect the same data

- professional, technical and ethical obstacles to information sharing

Commitment obstacles

- lack of explicit commitment to interagency working

- differing levels of 'buy-in'; some agencies reluctant to engage

- where managers do not experience interagency working as part of core work, it is vulnerable to changes in work priorities

Interagency Planning Structures for Children's Services

- Children's Trusts (England)

- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (Northern Ireland)

- Children and Young People's Partnerships (Wales)

- Montgomery County Collaboration (USA)

- Strengthening Families and the High/Complex Needs Strategy (New Zealand)

Common Features of Interagency Planning Structures

Usually organised around a **framework of pre-identified high-level outcomes** (typically five to eight), which **address different dimensions of children's lives**.

Most focus on **strategic planning**, not on individual case management

Most of the structures **rely on influence and voluntary co-operation** rather than mandate, although they are sometimes underpinned by specific legislation.

Where there is legislation usually around the **vehicle for delivery of interagency working,** not for the specific services to be delivered.

Commonly have a **Chair and a Co-ordinator** (although the latter plays an important role, they are not always mandated or supported as strongly as they could be, and not always paid)

Evidence about the Effectiveness of Interagency Planning Structures

As yet, **limited evidence of measurable impact** on improved outcomes for children and where it exists results are mixed

Take **time to become embedded in practice**, particularly where there is little previous history of interagency working

Leads to **improved professional practice**

Provides better **support to families at an earlier stage** for children and families who need it

Interagency Working in Action

Children's Services Committees

Policy Origins

Policy documents

- Agenda for Children's Services

- National Children's Strategy

- Towards 2016

- Transforming Public Services

- Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, 2009 Implementation Plan

- Programme (s) for Government

Children's Services Committees

Children's Services Committees (CSCs) are a structure for bringing together a diverse group of agencies in local county areas to engage in joint planning and co-ordination of services for children.

The overall purpose of the CSCs is to secure better developmental outcomes for children.

Five National Outcomes for Children

1. Healthy, both physically and mentally

2. Supported in active learning

3. Safe from accidental and intentional harm/ Secure in the immediate and wider physical environment

4. Economically secure

5. Part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community/Included and participating in society

Children's Services Committees – Purpose:

Coordinating the implementation of national and regional policies and strategies that relate to children young people and families

Planning and coordinating services for children in the area covered by the CSC

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

Strengthening the decision-making capacity at local level

CSCs Current Status

Phase I
(established 2007 - 2008)

- Donegal
- Dublin City
- Limerick City
- South Dublin

Phase II
(established 2009 - 2010)

- Carlow
- Fingal
- Kerry
- Kildare
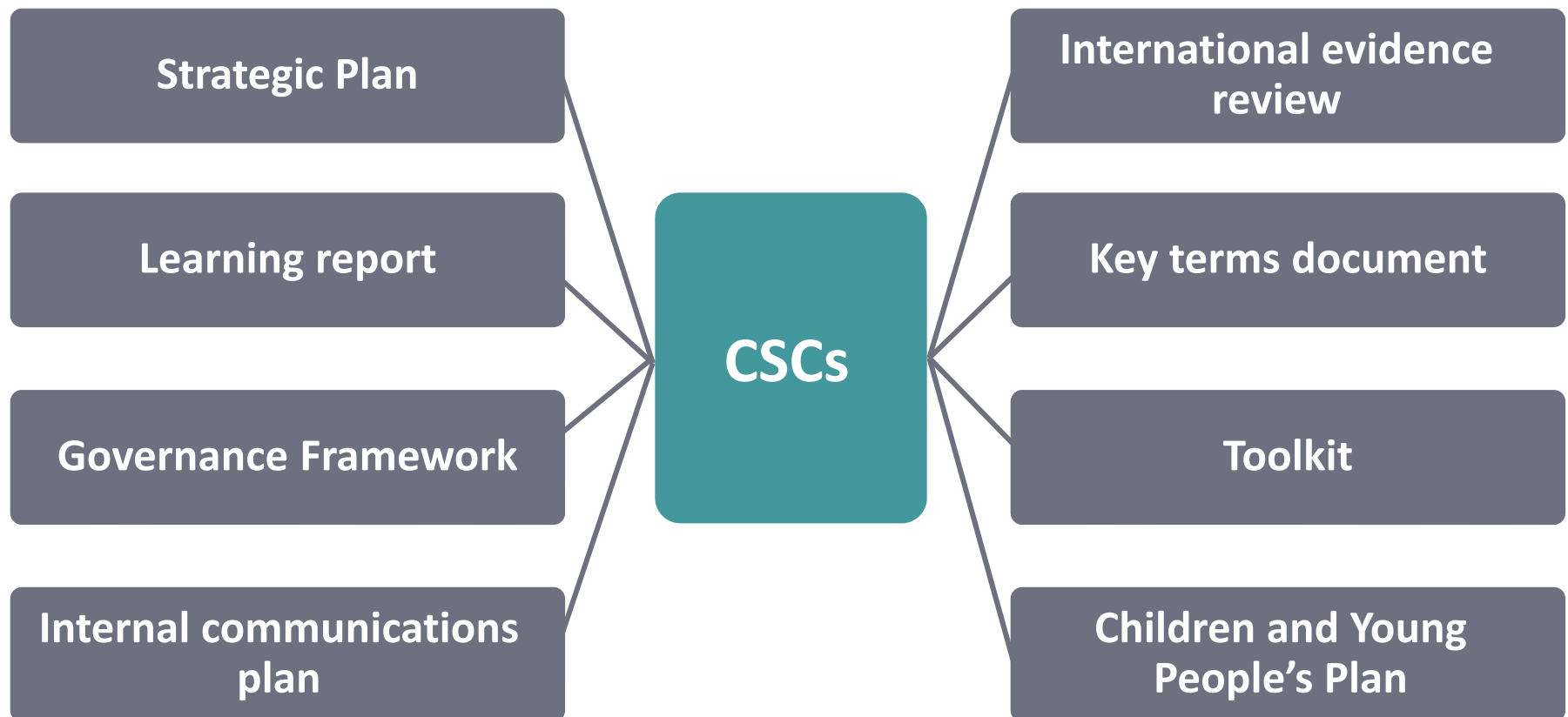- Longford/Westmeath
- Louth

Phase III
(established 2011 - present)

- Cavan/Monaghan
- Meath
- Sligo/Leitrim
- South Tipperary
- Waterford
- Wicklow

Suite of Resources and Documents Developed for CSCs

Strategic Plan

Learning report

Governance Framework

Internal communications plan

CSCs

International evidence review

Key terms document

Toolkit

Children and Young People's Plan

Membership of CSCs

Membership should include representatives from the following:

- HSE/Child and Family Support Agency (*Chair);*

- Local Authority (*Deputy Chair);*

- Education sector (which could include, for example, IPPN, NAPD, NEWB, NEPS and VEC);

- Probation Service;

- An Garda Síochána;

- Social Inclusion partners (including, for example, Family Support Agency ,County Childcare Committee).

- Voluntary or community organisations,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.

National Governance of CSCs

National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG)

Children's Services Committees Steering Group

Children's Services Committees

Donegal	Dublin City	Limerick City	South Dublin	Carlow	Fingal	Kerry	Kildare	Longford/Westmeath	Louth	Cavan/Monaghan	Meath	Sligo/Leitrim	South Tipperary	Waterford	Wicklow

Phase 1 *Phase 2* *Phase 3*

Timeline

Children's Services Committees – Significant Dates

Agenda for Children's Services
Phase 1

Strategic Plan
CES Learning Report

Networking Event
Key Terms

Phase 2
- Phase 2
- Fingal
- Louth
- Kerry
- Longford/Westmeath
- Carlow
- Kildare

Governance Framework

Children & Young People's Plan
Phase 3
- Phase 3
- Wicklow
- Meath
- Cavan/Monaghan
- Sligo/Leitrim
- Waterford
- South Tipperary

Interagency Review
Networking Event

Toolkit
Steering Group
- National Children's Strategy Implementation Group (NCSIG)
- Children's Services Committees Steering Group
- 16 Children's Services Committees

Phase 1
- Phase 1
- Donegal
- Limerick City
- Dublin City
- South Dublin

2007 | **March 2010** | **May 2010** | **Dec 2010** | **2011** | **Sept 2011** | **2012**

What have we Learned...

- It takes time

- Needs champions

- Leads to changes in practices and processes

- Needs to be evidence based . . . . but also

- Experiential

- Common approach and standardisation

The Future...

- Child and Family Support Agency

- Reform of local government

- Further roll out of CSCs nationally

"This really is an innovative approach, but I'm afraid we can't consider it. It's never been done before."

What do we need to keep in mind

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

Henry Ford (1863-1947)

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