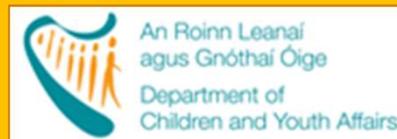


Crafting comprehensive policy for children and young people in Ireland

Conor Rowley
Principal Officer
Policy Innovation
Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Ireland

Inter City Youth Conference
Milan
October 2016



“Ciao. Grazie per avermi invitato a parlare qui oggi a questa importante conferenza. Il mio nome è Conor ed io lavoro nel ministero per i bambini e la gioventù in Irlanda.

Sono ‘policy maker, ‘decision maker’ e conduco per l’attuazione di una serie di iniziative volte a migliorare i risultati per i bambini e i giovani in Irlanda.

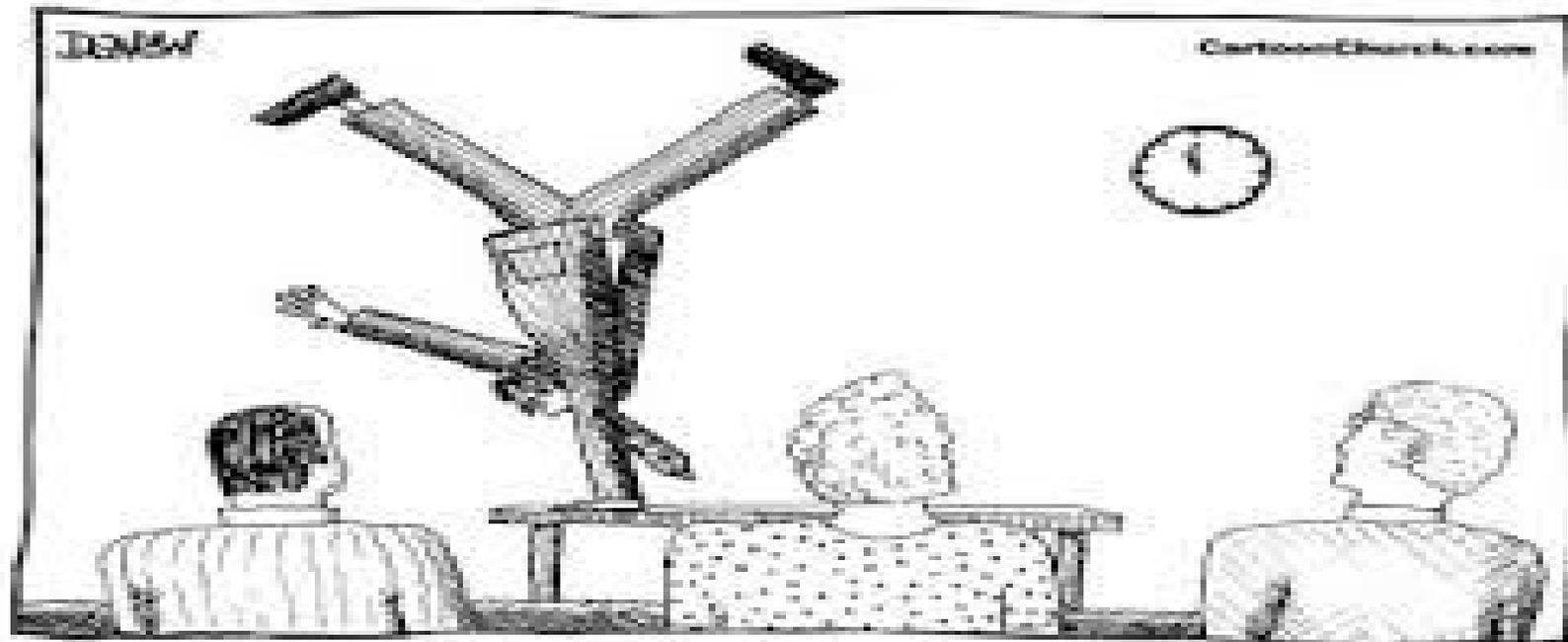
Tuttavia, non sono nato un ‘policy maker’! Il mio background è in istruzione formale, non formale, lavoro giovanile, la formazione e la psicoterapia.

Prima che la mia posizione attuale ero l’Assessore Nazionale per il lavoro giovanile in Irlanda. Così, mi sono impegnato a prendere le davvero buone caratteristiche di lavoro di apprendimento dei giovani e l’applicazione di questi per la politica più ampia, la fornitura di servizi e la pratica per tutti i bambini e i giovani”

Session Outline

- Introduction
- Reflections as a Policy maker
- Challenges for non-formal learning and youth work
- Some possible ways of clearing these obstacles
- Examples of some promising advances in Ireland
- Concluding thoughts

Presentation of Non Formal Learning and Youth Work 1



Dave was surprised at the variety of tasks a youthworker was expected to perform.

Presentation of Non Formal Learning and Youth Work 2



When Non Formal Learning and Youth Work doesn't work to its potential...

- Defines itself against other services and practices.
- Emphasises ideology at the expense of epistemology and methodology.
- Doesn't focus enough on its educative and developmental role.
- Assumes that the work speaks for itself rather than demonstrating clear processes and beneficial outcomes.
- When it only works solo – or works in a silo.
- Sees youth participation as an add-on, not a necessity.
- Dismisses accountability and quality as bureaucracy.

For non-formal learning and youth work to move from surviving to thriving it should emphasise the following:

- Client relevant
- Practice relevant
- Provider/service relevant
- Policy relevant

**And it must ensure connections to each and all of the above.
It should also identify and demonstrate its:**

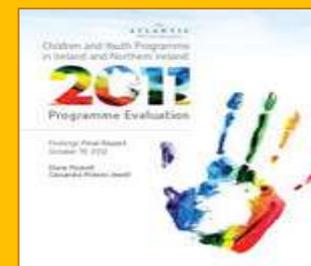
- unique selling point
- added value
- process and product
- market and route to market
- ability to innovate according to needs, aspirations and trends

Context and climate: Changing landscapes in policy and provision in Ireland

Practice & Research Developments

2007

Enhanced focus on Evidence & Outcomes...



Institutional Developments

2011

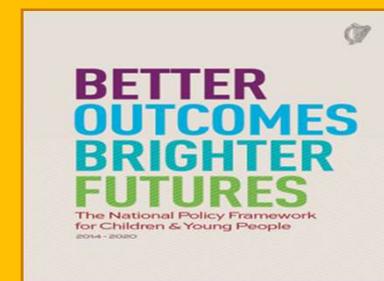
Establishment of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs...



Policy Developments

2014

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People...



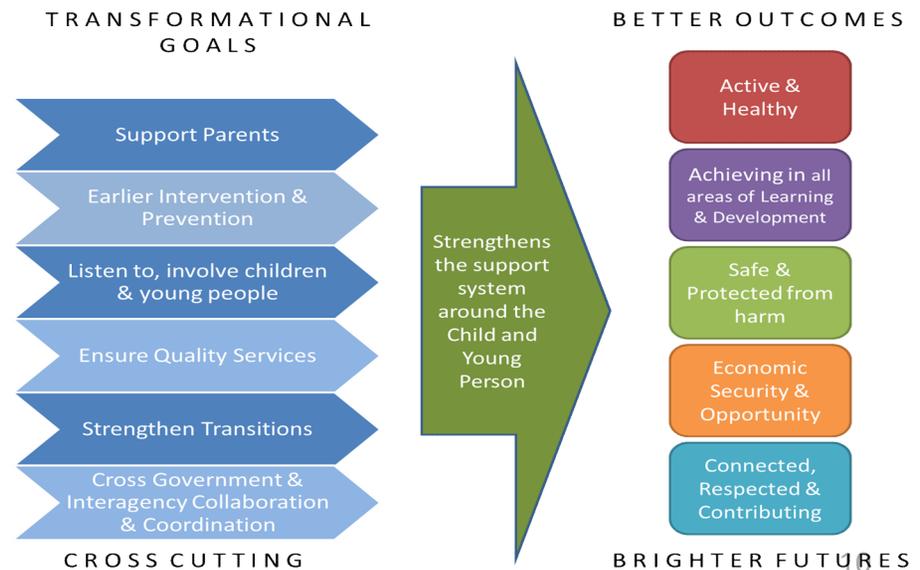
Overview of Framework

Key features of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

- First overarching national policy framework spanning children and young people (0 – 24 years).
- Represents a whole of government approach running from 2014 until 2020
- Accommodates a number of constituent strategies.

The Framework:

- sets out and centralises common outcomes
- captures 163 policy commitments
- identifies key transformational goals necessitating action
- ensures an innovative and effective way of working.



Architecture

NATIONAL OUTCOMES



AIMS:

Children and young people are or have ...

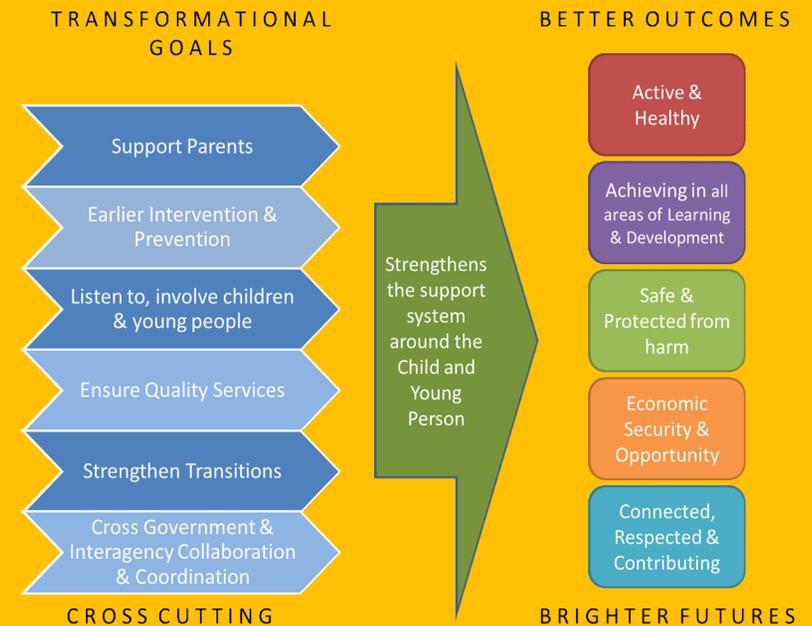


Children and Young People have a voice and influence in all decisions affecting them

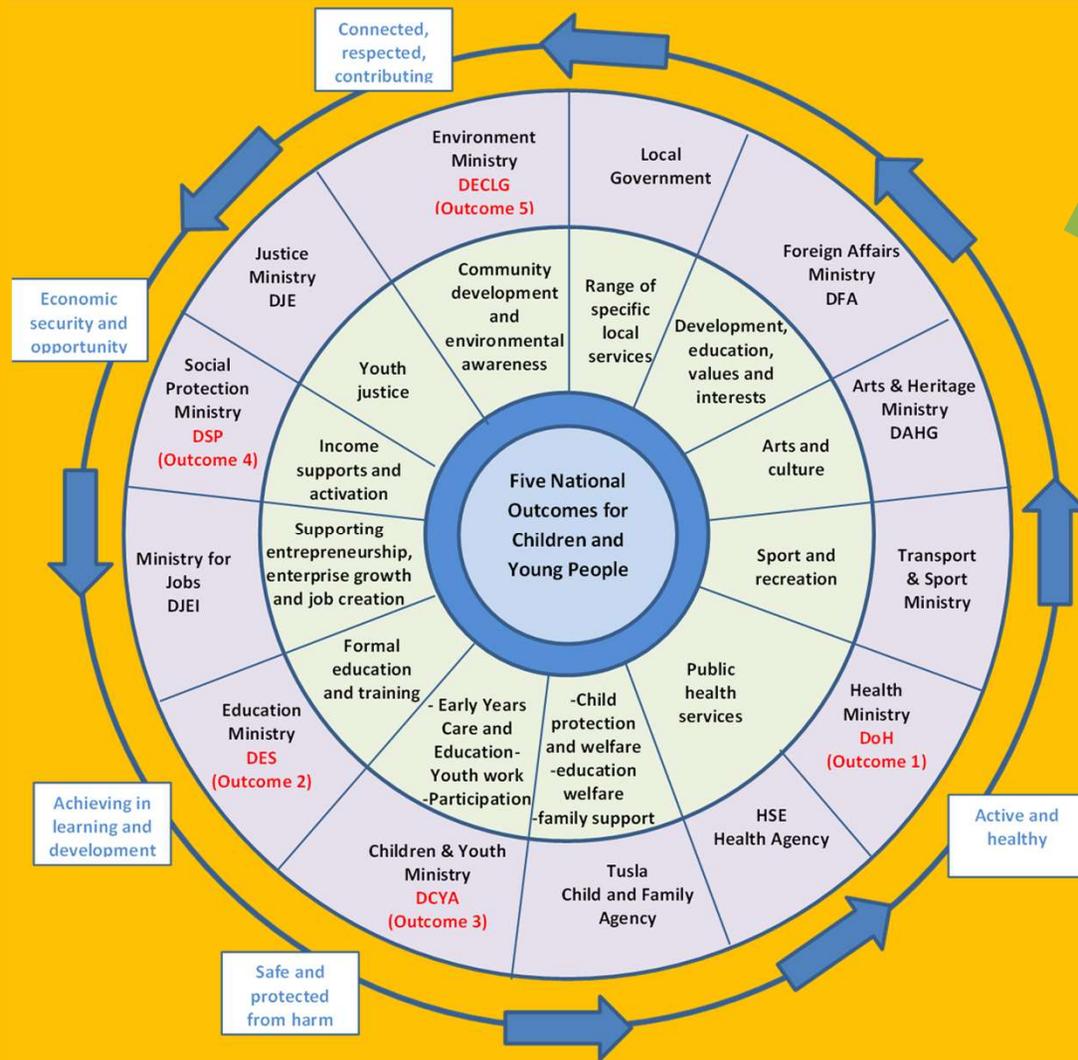
Evidence informed policy

Learning from Prevention & Early Intervention

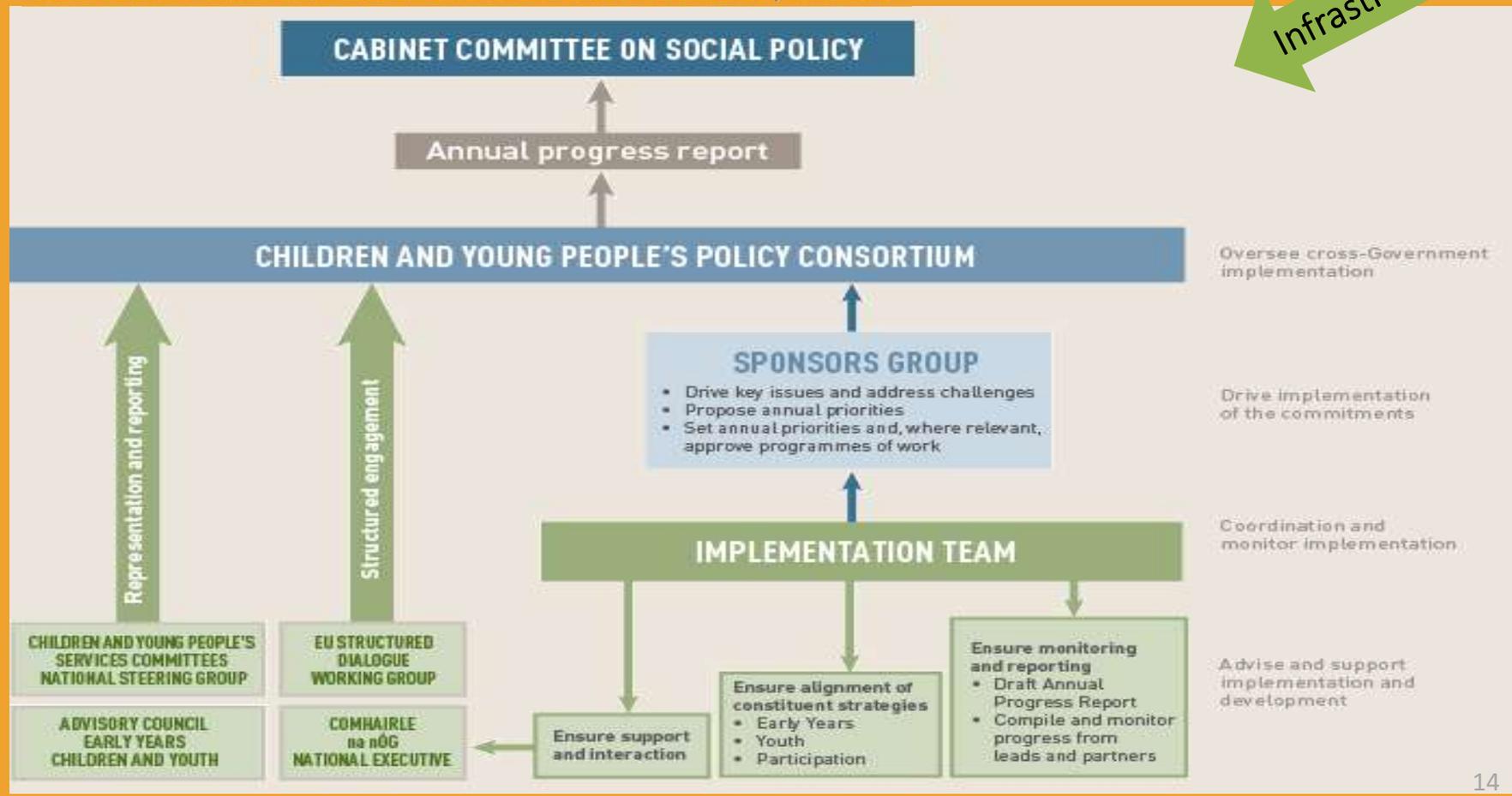
1. Supporting parents pays real dividends in terms of children's outcomes
2. There should be a strong focus on supporting child development for 0-3s
3. Supporting key transitions can make a significant difference to outcomes
4. Initiatives to support children's and young peoples learning must promote a love of learning and be clear how they will integrate into the school setting
5. Programmes that support social and emotional learning and promote inclusion should be supported by wider school structures and policies
6. Development of personal skills and aptitudes should be part of formal and ongoing training for all professionals
7. Consulting with local communities helps ensure that PEI services fit with the needs of children, young people and families
8. Effective interagency structures are vital to ensuring better services



Policy Domains impacting on children & young people



BETTER OUTCOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES
 THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, 2014-2020



Infrastructure

1. Policy:

- Centralises Children and Young People in and across policy domains.
- Sets out the policy framework in which we will work and within which the constituent strategies will be developed and implemented.

2. Process:

- Establishes and aligns the work processes of groupings, both horizontally and vertically, within a robust implementation infrastructure.
- Streamlines and structures the work programmes of groupings to ensure that a shared agenda is identified and common approach adopted .

3. Practice:

- Endeavours to bring about a change in the way we all work to ensure optimum outcomes for children and young people.
- Moves from sector and practice specific responses towards a more comprehensive and coordinated approach.

4. Product:

- Connects the policy domains of Early Years, Children and Youth.
- Provides a coherent and collaborative approach to the implementation and achievement (and ongoing identification) of policy objectives and commitments.
- Situates the needs and aspirations of children and young people within a holistic outcomes-focused policy context.

BETTER OUTCOMES BRIGHTER FUTURES

The national policy framework
for children & young people
2014 - 2020

Annual Report for the
first year of implementation,
April 2014 – 2015

Active &
Healthy

Achieving

Safe

Economic
Security

Connected
& Respected



BLUEPRINT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES



BETTER OUTCOMES BRIGHTER FUTURES

Quarterly newsletter on the implementation of
the National Policy Framework for Children and
Young People and related developments

ISSUE 03 2016



this issue

- EU Peer Review P.1
- Key learning from Peer Review P.2
- CYPSC and participation P.3
- Structured Dialogue P.4
- QCR, ABC and upcoming events P.5

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures has welcomed a new member: Sean Cerswell, CEO of Forbairt. The Council has also developed a workplan for 2016. Priority areas for 2016 include child poverty, homelessness, prevention and earlier intervention, human rights and equality, and community and voluntary sector involvement on CYPSC. Information on the role and composition of the Advisory Council will be available on the [CYPSC website](#).

Annual Report

Reporting on progress on commitments in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is underway across government. Departments and agencies have been asked to report on their progress on the 133 commitments, as well as on other related initiatives for children and young people which are being progressed. The completed report will also include commentary from the Chairs of key groups in the implementation infrastructure. It is intended that the report will be ready for presentation to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy towards the end of Q2 2016.

Prevention and Early Intervention in Ireland: EU Peer Review

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Social Protection and the European Commission, hosted a European seminar on 16th and 17th February as part of the [European Day of Action](#) in the area of social protection and social inclusion. The theme of the seminar was to explore how to mainstream learning in early intervention and prevention approaches to improve outcomes for children, particularly those at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Evidence shows that disadvantages suffered at an early stage tend to multiply as children become older, and that effective prevention and early intervention can halt and reverse poor outcomes.

Prevention and early intervention is a key transformational goal under Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People and a dedicated sub-group was set up on prevention and early intervention under the Advisory Council as part of the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures structures. It is also an important theme for Children and Young People's Services Committees and for a number of flagship initiatives that attracted significant investment by the Department such as the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (2007-2011) and the Area-Based Childhood Programme (2013-2017).

The seminar (photo above) involved exchanging views and experiences of representatives from nine EU member states, NGOs, the Advisory Council, academics as well as a range of Irish government departments and agencies about how best to adopt prevention and early intervention approaches in a systematic way. The seminar was informed by the best country paper, detailing key developments in Ireland, the discussion paper that sets out the European context as well as comment papers by Member State representatives and NGOs. These documents along with key learning points from the seminar can be accessed here [\[Link\]](#). An overall report on the peer review will be presented by Professor Hugh Frater (NUI, European Social Policy Network).





So what?

So, we have policy, we have strategy, we have structures, we have cross departmental and sectoral collaboration.... So what?

To achieve collaborative systems change to improve outcomes for children and young people we need...

A theme to target and a vehicle to make it travel -

Focusing on Prevention and Early Intervention as a theme to unite and to transform policy, provision and practice

This is being done through the Quality and Capacity Building Initiative (QCBI)

What is the QCBI?

A cross-policy and sectoral initiative focusing on systems change to improve outcomes for children and young people by embedding and enhancing best practice learning in prevention and early intervention.

Who is the QCBI aimed at?

The QCBI is aimed at those working with and for children, young people and their families. This initiative aims to be **system-wide along the policy, provision and practice continuum**. It will include policy makers, statutory agencies, researchers and academics, voluntary organisations and practitioners who work with children, young people and their families.

Overview of QCBI



Components of QCBI

Key aims, actions and outcomes of QCBI

Primary aims & actions

- Improve access and use of data
- Collect and disseminate research and learning
- Developing coaching and training programme
- Establishing a shared quality framework

Primary outcomes

- Enhanced information base
- Enhanced evidence base
- Enhanced knowledge base
- Enhanced skills base
- Enhanced and sustained quality base

Secondary outcomes

- Greater alignment and connectivity in the implementation of prevention and early intervention policies
- Enhanced capacity, knowledge and quality through the system
- Greater alignment of the delivery system with known evidence-informed and outcomes-focused approaches
- Improved coordination, collaboration & use of resources

Evidenced and enhanced **Long-Term Outcomes** for Children, Young People and Their Families



Why align policy for young people

- Strengthens policy span
- Reinforces a service continuum
- Spans key developments in ages and stages
- Centres the young person – not any particular practice
- Shared agenda – harness efforts – maximise impact – optimise outcomes
- Shares the learning
- Disrupts silos and specialists in the service of children and young people – in policy, provision and practice!
- Allows us to recognise, reflect on/in and resource the **continuum of policy-provision-practice**: should ideally be dynamic, mutually informing and reinforcing and multidirectional.
- Enhances our chances on young people getting the best outcomes

- Need to ensure coherence, coordination and connectivity.
- Need to work with the willing and able – achieve a critical mass, move and make progress.
- Need to emphasis that young people deserve the best service (policy and service provision) – the right people, doing the right things, at the right time.

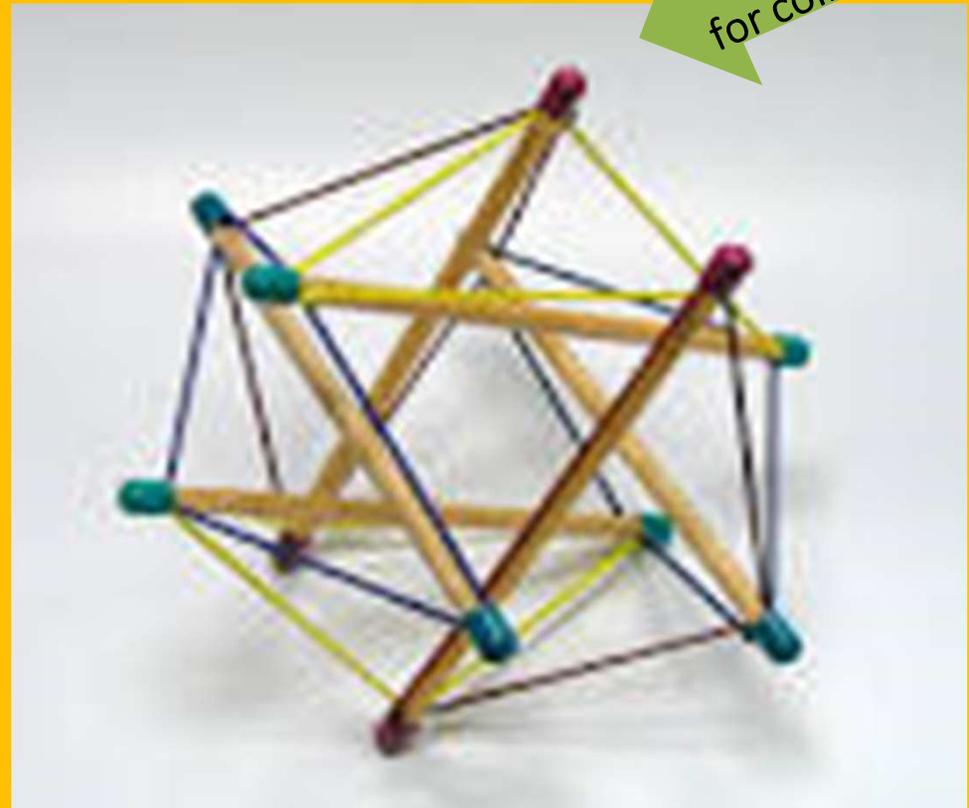
Youth and non formal learning has a clear place to take in the continuum of policies and services for children and young people. It needs to confidently articulate and evidence its practice and impact What is the transactional pinch-point – what are we giving and what are young people getting? Crucially, it needs to take its place in a collaborative response to delivering the best for children and young people

Tensegrity:

Architecture.1:

'the property of skeleton structures that employ continuous tension members and discontinuous compression members in such a way that each member operates with the maximum efficiency and economy.'

(Dictionary.com)



Structural model for collaboration?

Thank you and feedback to:

Conor Rowley, Principal Officer, Policy Innovation Unit
Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Ireland

conor_rowley@dcya.gov.ie

www.dcy.gov.ie