
Key Findings

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WHAT ARE THE KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS?

**Work Package Meitheal and Child and Family Support**

**Networks**: This programme of work is at the implementation phase and moving into sustainability. Much learning generated and some key issues identified shaping resolution.

**Key Indicators**

- The programme demonstrates potential for the Meitheal to engage in systemic change and contribute to the sustainability of the services.
- Meitheals and GPs/primary care centres are beginning to complete network and introduce capacity development.
- Early learning and development services (EYDS) are starting to facilitate change in family outcomes and the family unit.
- During the period 2015-17, 2,288 Meitheals have been established.
- Some overarching issues identified include the need for: infrastructure for implementing commissioning and preparation; support for structural, procedural and practice indicators.
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**Work Package Parenting Support and Parental Participation**

This programme of work is at the implementation phase and moving into sustainability. Much learning generated and some key issues identified shaping resolution.

**Key Indicators**

- The national communications team and Tusla’s national and regional managers now receive regular information on key achievements, where commissioning and preparation, ensuring consistent and standardised reporting.
- Some overarching issues identified include the need for: operationalising the parent involvement and engagement strategy; and support for structural, procedural and practice indicators.
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**Work Package Public Awareness**

This programme of work is at the implementation phase and moving into sustainability. Much learning generated and some key issues identified shaping resolution.

**Key Indicators**

- The communications work, in particular, has identified the need for: greater clarification of the relationship between child protection and parental involvement.
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**Work Package Commissioning**

- The commissioning work, in particular, has identified the need for: greater clarification of the relationship between child protection and parental involvement.
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**Strategies, Policies, Rights**

- The National Communications Strategy was created to facilitate the implementation of the PPFS Programme. The strategy is designed to inform implementation interventions, and to ensure that the strategies are effective.

**Leadership**

- The National Communications Strategy was created to facilitate the implementation of the PPFS Programme. The strategy is designed to inform implementation interventions, and to ensure that the strategies are effective.

**Evidence**

- The National Communications Strategy was created to facilitate the implementation of the PPFS Programme. The strategy is designed to inform implementation interventions, and to ensure that the strategies are effective.

**Culture and Climate**

- The National Communications Strategy was created to facilitate the implementation of the PPFS Programme. The strategy is designed to inform implementation interventions, and to ensure that the strategies are effective.

**Sustainability**

- The National Communications Strategy was created to facilitate the implementation of the PPFS Programme. The strategy is designed to inform implementation interventions, and to ensure that the strategies are effective.
At an overall level, we offer recommendations within the frame of the commitments made by Tusla regarding the continuation of the work of the PPFS Programme. Firstly, we recommend that Tusla implement all recommendations proposed by each of the Work Packages. In terms of organisational culture and climate, we recommend that the DCYA supports and resources Tusla in achieving its Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support goals elaborated in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures national policy framework. Moreover, we recommend that Tusla continue to develop an organisational culture and climate that is inclusive of and supportive of Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support. With regards to integration, we recommend that the DCYA works alongside and supports Tusla to generate commitments with other Departments of State and relevant agencies in the achievement of its actions on prevention and early intervention and Family support. We recommend that the PPFS national team further integrate the PPFS components into the existing infrastructure (Family Support Services, Child Protection and Welfare Services and all other components of the service provision system) through the implementation of a simple audit of integration. This audit will allow Tusla to identify and develop an action plan to remove barriers and enhance the full integration of the PPFS Programme and in particular the Area Based Approach. Lastly, in terms of using evidence to inform service delivery, we recommend that Tusla develop a system-wide framework for generating and using evidence in the processes of: establishing service need; decision-making on service provision in the context of commissioning; and assessing the achievement of service outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS?

Outcomes
1. The Area-based approach has been implemented across all of Tusla’s areas and is positively perceived by its stakeholders. It is not yet operating at full complement in all areas and as yet not fully standardised or consistent. The core principles are working well and the positive experience to-date represents a strong basis on which to arrive at consistent nationwide implementation.
2. The evaluation has demonstrated significant strides by Tusla in embedding children’s participation in its culture and operations, although more work is required in specific areas.
3. New approaches to parenting support and parental participation have been tested out during the Programme and have demonstrated potential for operation at a system-wide level. The profile of parenting has been raised in the organisation by the implementation of the Programme. The experience of implementation has demonstrated the need for a specific leadership role for this part of the organisation’s work.
4. The foundations have been laid for the achievement of a rigorous and evidence-informed commissioning approach, particularly in the form of organisational infrastructure, strategy and practice materials, and capacity within Tusla at area level. Much remains to be done towards capacity building generally and in particular supporting the community and voluntary sector in this new funding context. Tusla’s capacity in relation to evidence for commissioning is at the early stages of development.
5. The findings demonstrate greater awareness of Tusla and PPFS over the Programme timeframe but there is no strong evidence to suggest greater awareness of available supports. Our findings from the Area-based approach are suggestive of reduced risk of falling through service gaps but there is no rigorous data to confirm this.

Evaluative Conclusion
Our strong conclusion is that the organisational culture of Tusla is changing such that it is becoming more preventative in focus and inclusive of parents and children. This is demonstrated across the Work Packages, in the findings from our data on systems change, reflecting the views of key actors in Tusla and external to the organisation, and in key organisational documents. While the finding indicates positive developments in relation to services becoming more integrated in the Area-based approach, there are issues which require ongoing attention. The organisation has committed to working in an evidence informed way and has developed some capacity to do so through the Commissioning and Parenting Support and Parental Participation Work Packages, but much work is required in relation to data, analysis, and on outcomes and evidence frameworks.

Recommendations
At an overall level, we offer recommendations within the frame of the commitments made by Tusla regarding the continuation of the work of the PPFS Programme. Firstly, we recommend that Tusla implement all recommendations proposed by each of the Work Packages. In terms of organisational culture and climate, we recommend that the DCYA supports and resources Tusla in achieving its Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support goals elaborated in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures national policy framework. Moreover, we recommend that Tusla continue to develop an organisational culture and climate that is inclusive of and supportive of Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support. With regards to integration, we recommend that the DCYA works alongside and supports Tusla to generate commitments with other Departments of State and relevant agencies in the achievement of its actions on prevention and early intervention and Family support. We recommend that the PPFS national team further integrate the PPFS components into the existing infrastructure (Family Support Services, Child Protection and Welfare Services and all other components of the service provision system) through the implementation of a simple audit of integration. This audit will allow Tusla to identify and develop an action plan to remove barriers and enhance the full integration of the PPFS Programme and in particular the Area Based Approach. Lastly, in terms of using evidence to inform service delivery, we recommend that Tusla prioritise the development of an outcomes framework that reflects its expectations for children, young people and parents at all points within the service delivery system. In addition, we recommend that Tusla develop a system-wide framework for generating and using evidence in the processes of: establishing service need; decision-making on service provision in the context of commissioning; and assessing the achievement of service outcomes.
**List of Publications for the Overall Systems Change Work Package:**


Further Information

If you would like to read the Systems Change: Final Evaluation Report on Tusla’s Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme, or any of the publications listed above please visit our website [www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch](http://www.nuigalway.ie/childandfamilyresearch). If you have any questions on our research, please email [cfrc@nuigalway.ie](mailto:cfrc@nuigalway.ie)

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**About the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre**

The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC) is part of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society at the National University of Ireland, Galway. It was founded in 2007, through support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, Ireland and the Health Service Executive, with a base in the School of Political Science and Sociology, the mission of the Centre is to help create the conditions for excellent policies, services and practices that improve the lives of children, youth and families through research education and service development. The UCFRC has an extensive network of relationships and research collaborations internationally and is widely recognised for its core expertise in the areas of Family Support and Youth Development.