



CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICES

Using a Whole of Government Approach to Address Child Poverty

Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years

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Introduction to CES

CES

connects research, policy and practice
to improve outcomes
for communities,
children and young people,
across the island of Ireland

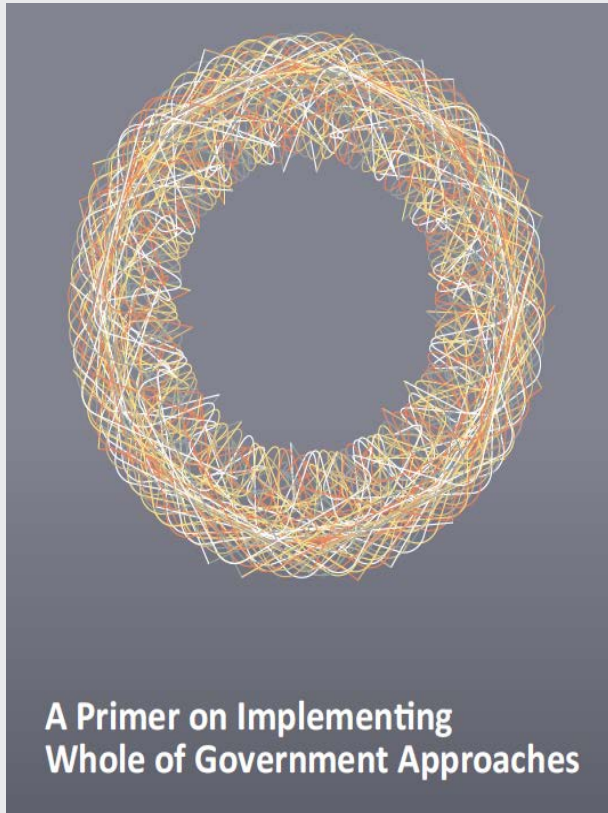
Presentation Outline

What is Whole of Government?

How can we do it?

Whole of Government in Action – ABC Programme

A Primer on Implementing Whole of Government Approaches



- A Primer has been developed by CES on how to implement Whole of Government Approaches.
- Developed through review of the literature, international case study examples of this kind of work, & experience of CES working to support systems change.
- CES has extracted some key messages from these sources on *what works* in implementing a Whole of Government approach...

What is a Whole of Government approach?

- Whole of Government Approaches are boundary-spanning activities where government and public service agencies work together in an integrated & co-ordinated way on critical tasks.
- Can deliver on shared goals & outcomes that cannot be achieved by working in isolation.
- Aims to avoid having different policies cut across & undermine each other & to use all the instruments at the disposal of the state to optimise their impact.

Key Features of a Whole of Government Approach

- Whole of Government approaches are necessary for tackling 'wicked problems' such as child poverty.
- Focus on working with existing structures & optimising their effectiveness, rather than setting up new agencies or departments.
- There should be a shared view about the underlying causes of a problem & a shared vision for the solution.

Key Features of a Whole of Government Approach

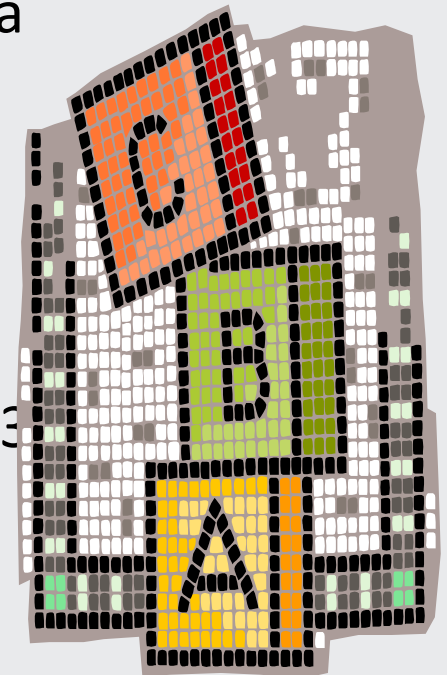
- All key stakeholders must be included. There should be an open approach to policy development & implementation to include those who implement policy at the front line & those affected by the policy.
- A cultural change is required that prioritises continuous professional development & the development of new skills & behaviours.

Key Features of a Whole of Government Approach

- Collaborative working over more 'top down' authority structures of government departments. These include information & data sharing, & new forms of budgetary/accountability arrangements.
- Political and administrative leadership is required which has the authority to reshape mandates & structures, & set clear goals.
- New or adapted forms of monitoring & evaluation are required that fit the complex issues that Whole of Government approaches tend to tackle.

Whole of Government Work in Action – ABC Programme

- The **Area Based Childhood (ABC)** programme is a Whole of Government approach to addressing child poverty (2013-2016).
- Total of €30m government & philanthropic funding.
- Aims to improve outcomes for children across 13 areas of greatest disadvantage in Ireland.
- Builds on learning from the Prevention & Early Intervention Initiative...



How has the learning from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative influenced the ABC Programme?



Whole of Government work in Action: ABC Programme

- Use of existing structures
 - Focus on embedding approaches in mainstream provision to promote sustainability
- Shared vision for solution to the problem
 - Service design stage to assess local needs, consult with stakeholders & community and develop a *Logic Model*
- Involve all key stakeholders
 - Consortia of key existing statutory and voluntary stakeholders

Whole of Government work in Action: ABC Programme

- Collaborative working
 - Activities include developing referral pathways, systems for information & data sharing, and processes to identify gaps in service provision
 - Consortium Agreement and local governance structures
- Culture change to support development of skills and behaviours
 - ABC Learning Community facilitates sharing of learning, knowledge and practice and peer support
 - Coaching and mentoring of professionals

Whole of Government work in Action: ABC Programme

- Political and administrative leadership
 - Interdepartmental Project Team provides cross-departmental oversight and advice
- New forms of monitoring & evaluation
 - ABC evaluation to examine service reach and access, service coordination and connectivity, and inter-agency working.
 - Emphasis on using data to inform decision-making and improve service delivery



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Thank you!

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