



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES

Cork

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1. Introduction

This submission relates to Cork Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC). CYPSC are a key structure identified by Government to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. The overall purpose is to improve outcomes for children and young people through local and national interagency working.

Child and youth participation is a key principle of Cork CYPSC including hearing the voice of seldom heard young people to ensure an inclusive approach. The impact of COVID on Young people has been immense and particularly for those who face greater barriers to accessing supports and services. It is essential to hear directly from these young people regarding how this has affected them, what improvements and supports they would like to see in County Cork to improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

This submission is a request for further engagement / consultation with CYPSC to consider how we can work collaboratively to align our plans to improve outcomes for children & young people and to ensure active participation by children and young people in the decisions that affect the quality of their lives in Cork County

2. Children and Young People's Services Committees

CYPSC are county-level committees that bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people. They provide a forum for joint planning and co-ordination of activity and for oversight of local policy and provision, to ensure that children, young people and their families receive optimum services. Their role is to enhance interagency co-operation and to realise the five national outcomes set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020*¹.

CYPSC are an initiative of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (now the DCEDIY) with oversight provided by a CYPSC National Steering Group. The CYPSC National Steering Group is part of the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* national implementation structures.

The CYPSC model of inter-agency working has developed and grown in Ireland since 2007. The *Blueprint for the development of Children and Young People's Services Committees* (DCYA, 2015)² provides an overview of CYPSC. Each Children and Young People's Services Committee develops and oversees the implementation of an evidenced-informed, strategic three-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for the county / CYPSC area, designed to improve outcomes for children and young people. The CYPPs respond to national priorities and local priorities that the CYPSC has agreed to address, and includes a detailed action plan of activities which will be undertaken by the CYPSC and its sub groups to make impact on those priorities. The CYPSC plan is developed in partnership with children, young people and families as well as in partnership with member agencies and sub groups and is responsive to local needs.

CYPSC membership comprises senior management from the statutory, community and voluntary providers in any county, that are working to provide services and to deliver better outcomes for

¹ https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf

² https://www.cypsc.ie/fileupload/Documents/Resources/Blueprint_for_the_development_of_CYPSC.pdf

children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. The CYPSC chairperson is drawn from Tusla Child and Family Agency with the CYPSC Vice Chairperson (vacant position in Cork) is drawn from the local authority. See figure 1 for CYPSC membership.

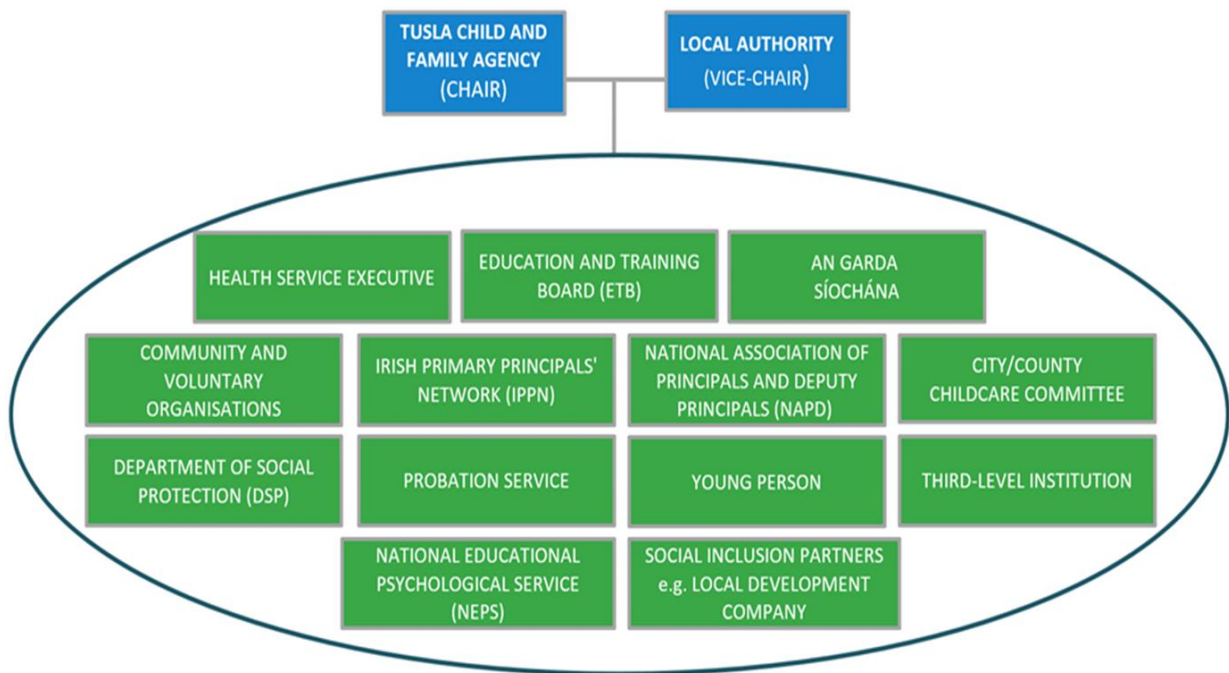


Figure 1. CYPSC membership.

3. Alignment of Action Plans

CYPSC priorities are aligned to the five National Outcomes for children and young people as outlined in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. These outcomes are that children and young people in Ireland:

1. Are **active and healthy**, with positive physical and mental well-being;
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of **learning and development**;
3. Are **safe and protected** from harm;
4. Have **economic security and opportunity**;
5. Are **connected, respected** and contributing to their world.

Cork CYPSC will be entering its next planning cycle for our Children and Young People’s plan 2024–2027, and we would welcome further collaboration with the County Council and LCDC’s in our planning cycles, to align our plans and improve outcome for children and young people.

4. Childrens Rights/ Consultation and Participation

CYPSC promotes best participation practice advocating for the participation of children and young people in decision-making. We have signed up to the Lundy model of participation. The model provides a way of conceptualising a child's right to participation, as laid down in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.² It is intended to focus decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order: space, voice, audience, influence. More information on the model can be found in Laura Lundy's 2007 publication on child participation.

The Lundy Model of Participation was prominently featured and endorsed by the Irish Department of Children and Youth Affairs in their National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making (2015– 2020).

Evidence tells us that involving children and young people in decision-making can result in improved service and population outcomes, such as health outcomes. It is essential therefore that the voice of children and young people be made more visible within any new Plan.

5. Comments and Recommendations:

1. We would request that 'Children and young people need to be specifically named within the Cork County plan. Specific mention should also be considered to address the inclusion of all children, incorporating neurodiversity, mixed abilities, and those experiencing poverty, deprivation and marginalization.'
2. We would request and welcome involvement in any planning processes that map services and supports to children and young people and access to any data to support joint planning and alignment of our respective plans.
3. We would welcome a strong stance on the inclusion of seldom heard voices, particularly those who are more marginalised, may experience racism and social exclusion, including migrants, young people from the Traveller and Roma community, children and young people living in International Protection and young people with additional needs, the LGBTQ community and young people who are homeless etc.
4. Cork CYPSC have agreed to have LCDC and LECP as a standing Agenda item for our meetings from September 2023, we would welcome a reciprocal arrangement with the LCDCs adding CYPSC as a standing Agenda item. The rationale for this is to improve communication, collaboration and coordination in respect of the 0-24 year old cohort

Further consultation on all of the above and an exploration of how we can further align our respective plans for improving outcomes for children and young people would be very welcome.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute through this call for submissions.

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