Policy implementation – Learning from literature and CES experience

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Outline

Whole of Government policy

- Learning from literature
- Example: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, ROI

Public service reform

- Learning from literature
- Example: Goal Programme, all island

Whole of Government Policy: Learning from literature and experience

Review of Whole of Government Policy Approaches

A Primer on Implementing
Whole of Government Approaches

CES
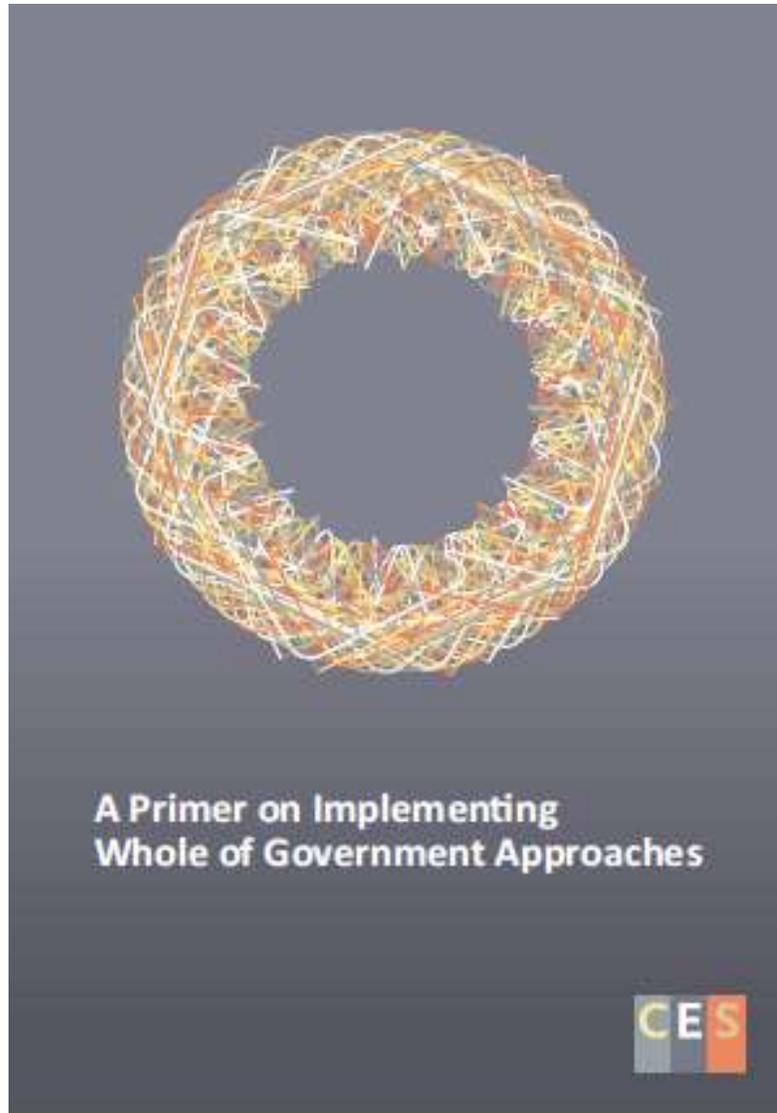
- An overarching term for a group of responses to the problem of increased fragmentation of the public sector and public services and a wish to increase integration, coordination and capacity (Ling, 2002)

- Number of terms used interchangeably, e.g. cross-government, whole of government, joined up working

- Emphasis may be of organisational levels, particular social groups, policy issues/ sectors, geographical areas, or modes of service delivery.

Factors Driving a Whole of Government Approach

Why use a Whole of Government Approach?

Evidence of impact of using whole of government approaches is limited, but review showed it may have following benefits:
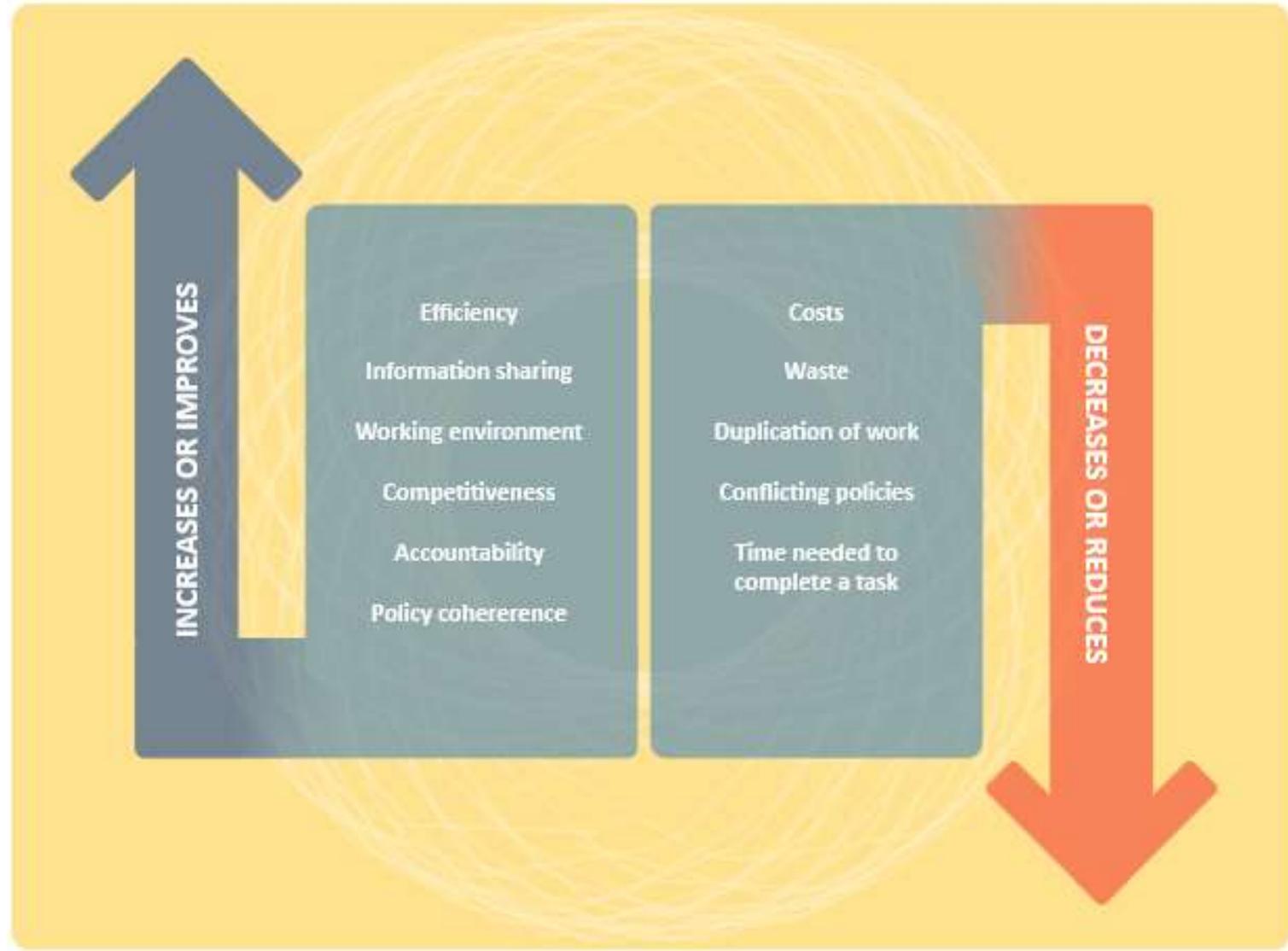
Whole of Government Policy - Challenges

- **Absence of joined-up thinking** about joined-up working – silos exist everywhere

- **Marrying collaboration** across boundaries **with autonomy** of organisations and with **vertical control**

- **Cultural challenges** - "Structural change is less important than overcoming the cultural barriers to operating across silos" (Whelan et al., 2003)

- **Time-consuming**

- Requires individuals to **put their own agendas aside**

- **Difficult to measure** in terms of its success

- May have **poorly defined, incompatible goals** and frequently involves **competing political and community agendas**

- **Lack of incentives**

Successful Whole of Government Work Requires

- High level of **leadership** at political and administrative level

- Build a **supportive culture** – build strategic alliances, manage complexity, and capitalise on opportunities afforded by interdependence

- **New ways of thinking** – a re-alignment of understandings about goals, roles and outcomes

- **Networked governance** – new forms of accountability, targets, budgetary management systems, and monitoring and evaluation

- **Structures that align with purpose**

- **New work processes**, e.g. performance management systems that reward whole of government work

- **Managing 'gaps'** – information, capacity, fiscal, administrative and policy gaps

- **Providing supports**, e.g. joint training, access to learning and development

Example: Indicator set for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures
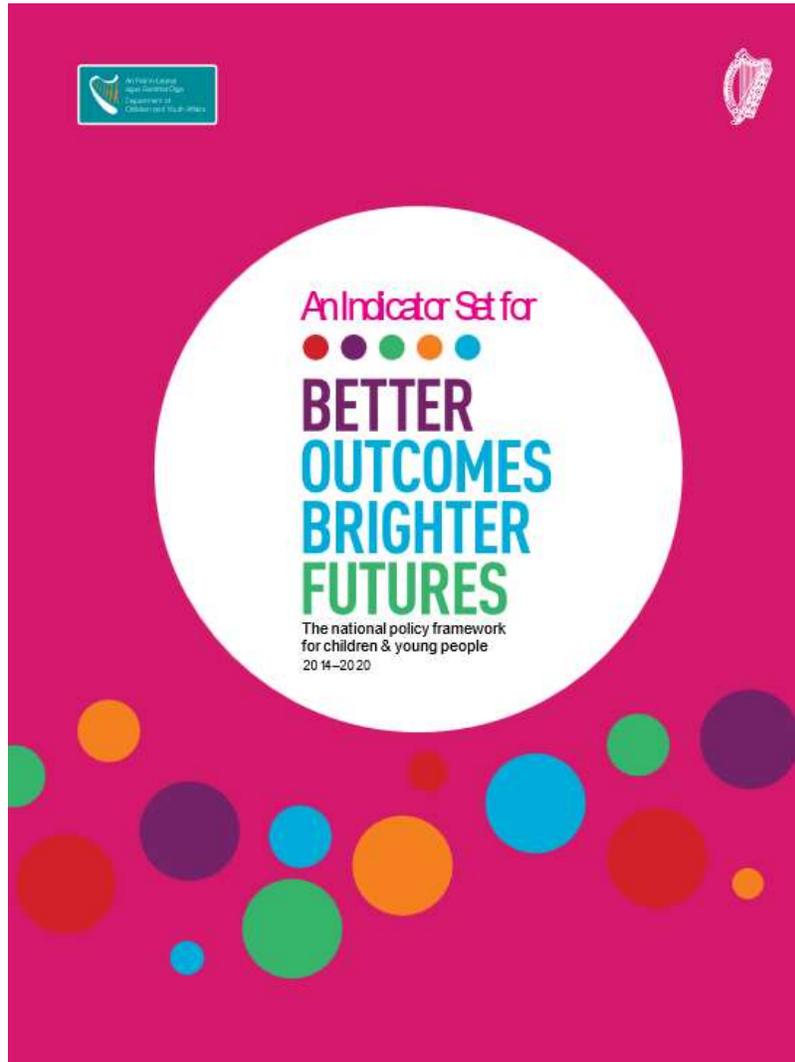
Steps in the process

Literature review and inventory of indicators

Indicator categorisation into indicator areas

Development of selection criteria and screening tool

Feasibility study

Application of selection criteria screening tool

Use of screening tool and Expert Panel feedback to reduce indicator areas

Delphi study to reach consensus

Agreeing the indicator set

Learning from the BOBF indicator set development

- Resource and time intensive

- BOBF implementation **infrastructure** supported process

- BOBF implementation **success difficult to measure**: Can't link BOBF implementation to outcomes

- Managing **information gaps**: many placeholders due to no suitable data available

- Working across boundaries and **competing agendas**: challenge of agreeing suitable indicators with Government Departments and Agencies

"A policy may be a beautiful thing to behold in the isolation of bureaucracy, but what really counts is how the policy is implemented and how it translates into service delivery"

(Metcalf, 2011)

Public service reform: Learning from literature and experience

Public Service Reform literature review

Implementing Public Service Reform
Messages from the Literature
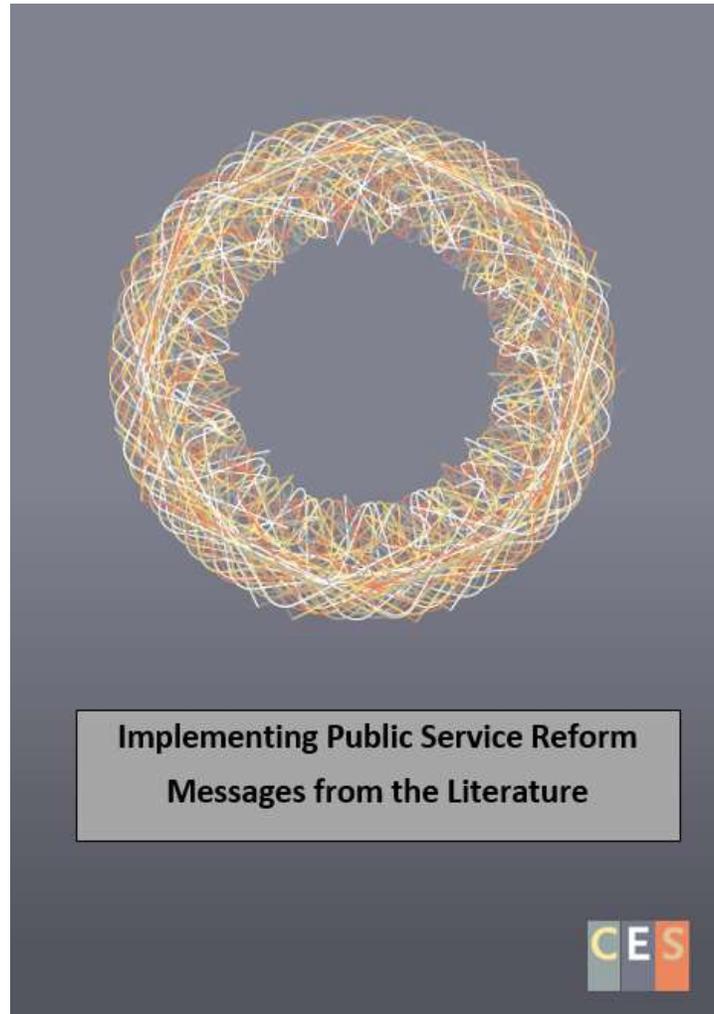
- What is known about effective implementation of public service reform?

  - Bringing an *'implementation lens'*

- **Brings together research and learning from a range of disciplines** – public administration and management, implementation science, change management and systems change

- **Case studies** of international examples of reform initiatives

- Guidance for **public service leaders and managers on 'factors to pay attention to'** when implementing public service reform.

Key messages on implementing public service reform

1. A compelling and explicit **vision** and **purpose** is essential

2. Strengthening **policy development skills** and integrating expertise on **implementation** should increase success

2. A **citizen centric** approach is a hallmark of a productive public sector organisation – but it must be *real*

3. Reform increasingly involves whole system, **whole of government** change to deliver responsive services

4. Reform of governance arrangements and structures alone will not deliver change

6. Reform requires **leadership** geared to managing complex change.

7. **Invest in people** – building capacity for managing complexity and continuous professional development are essential change enablers

8. **Public service values** are tangible assets which should be harnessed

9. Achieving systems change takes time, resources and requires leaders to think **long-term.**

Learning from the Goal Programme

4 years of work

6 government departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland

9 projects involving public sector reform & innovation

What we set out to do

Support systemic change in public services
to improve outcomes for people
in Ireland and Northern Ireland

CES's role

- Support for the projects
- **Learning** – across sectors and jurisdictions
- **Evaluation** – capture common learning across projects
- **Dissemination** – share learning across departments and more widely.

Our Approach

- Codesign/partnership
- Senior leadership support (Goal advisory group)

- Flexibility
- Additional skills (evidence and implementation)

Goal projects in Ireland

1

Knowledge management (DOH)

2

Youth mental health & wellbeing (DOH)

3

Collaborative working practices (DES)

4

Use of data (DES)

5

Reform of Youth Funding Schemes (DCYA)

6

Evaluation training (DCYA)

Goal projects in Northern Ireland

1
Leadership Development (NICS)

2
Innovation Lab (DOF)

3
Children & young people's strategies (DOE, DOH)

Spotlight on Children and Young People's Strategies

Rationale: 'Promoting and utilising a collaborative approach to the development and implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy'

Looked After Children' Strategy

Family and Parenting Support Strategy

- Co-ordinated, partnership working
- Realise a 'whole of government approach'
- Connection between implementation and monitoring of 3 Strategies

Project activities

CES supported three strategy teams to:

- review, analyse, translate and communicate evidence

- conduct stakeholder consultation

- draft strategy and report content

- define indicators and outcome measures

- think about and plan strategy implementation

- Explore interrelationships of the 3 Strategies and collaborative opportunities for teams.

Evaluating the work

- Conducted by the IPA (Queen's and the Institute for Government)

- Identifies common themes across the projects

- Interviews and workshops with civil servants who took part

- Three outputs – summative report, summary and 6 vignettes

The
Goal Programme for
Public Service Reform
and Innovation

Evaluation Exective Summary
October 2019

1 Distinctive Elements
of the Goal Programme

2 Project Selection for
the Goal Programme

3 Distributed Leadership
in the Goal Programme
for Public Service Reform

4 Strengthening Skills and Capacity
within the Civil and Public Service
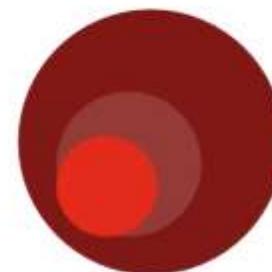
5 Promoting the Use
of Evidence and Data
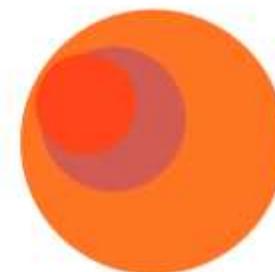
6 Sustaining New
Ways of Working

Launch of the Goal Evaluation Reports, Belfast 16th October 2019

What does the evaluation tell us?

- Progress in achieving 6 short-term outcomes

- 6 factors that can help or hinder public service reform

- 7 lessons for future public service reform programmes

Factors that help or hinder reform efforts

01

Leveraging senior buy-in and sponsorship.

02

Going with the grain: aligning with context, priorities and what has gone before.

03

Getting and keeping the right people, skills and expertise and managing succession.

04

Accessing and using external supports.

05

Applying appropriate tools and techniques to support change.

06

Enabling and embedding sustainable collaboration and cross-sectoral learning.

Lessons for future public service reform programmes

01
Focus on projects where desired outcomes are clear but the path there is uncertain.

02
Build strong but flexible governance arrangements.

03
Encourage leadership at all levels.

04
Balance pace and urgency with the need to take time and be iterative about change.

05
Take care over team selection and support their development.

06
Make appropriate use of external support.

07
Plan for sustainability and embedding of reform.

Thank You!

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