



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Implementation Plan 2019–2021



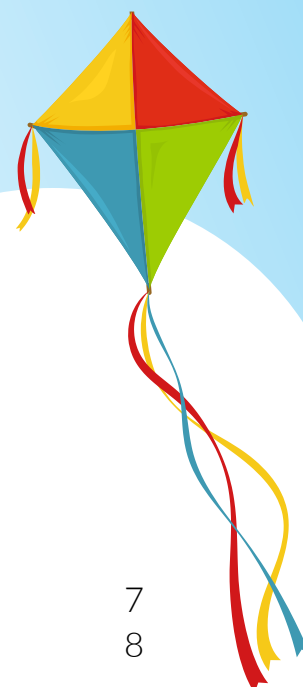




Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Implementation Plan 2019–2021



CONTENTS

Forewords

Taoiseach's foreword	7
Minister's foreword	8

Summary

First 5 big steps	10
The story of early childhood	12
A vision for early childhood	16
First 5 at a glance	18

Introduction

Background to Implementation Plan	21
Overview of First 5	23

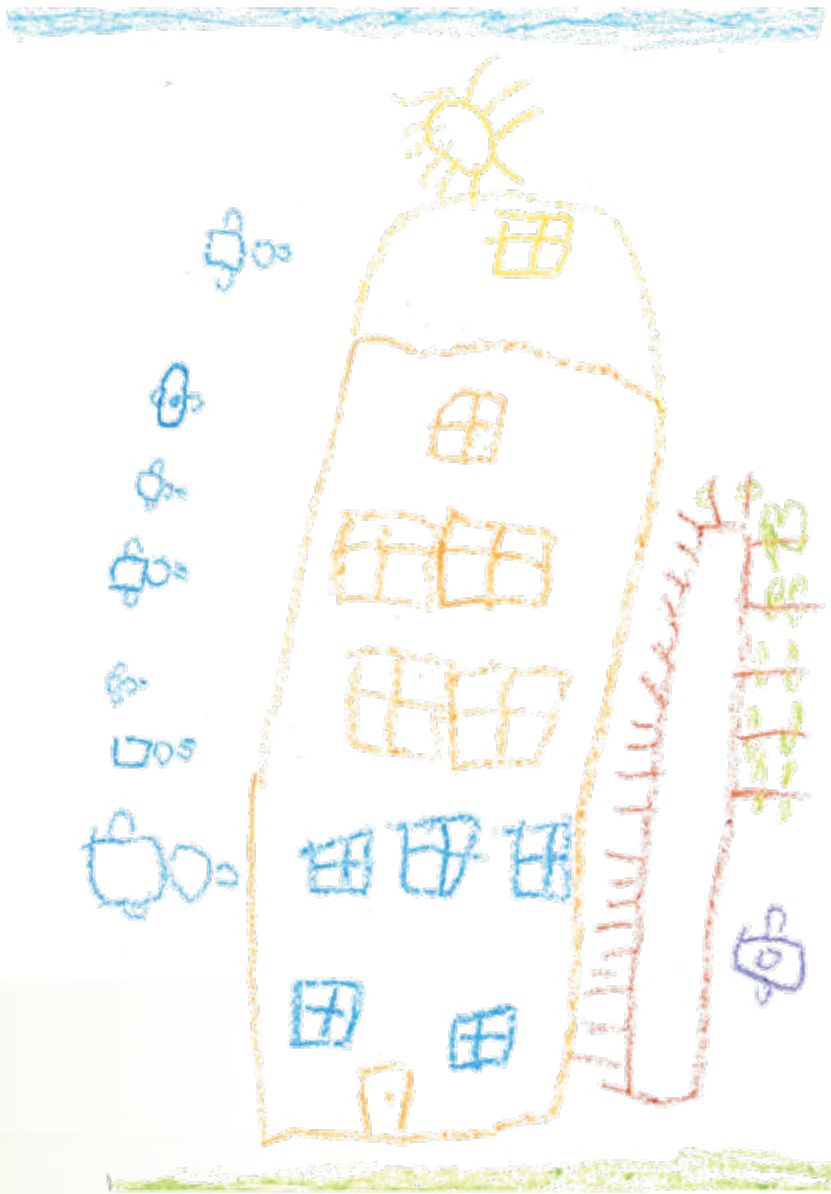
Actions and milestones tables

Goal A: Strong and supportive families and communities	28
Goal B: Optimum physical and mental health	45
Goal C: Positive play-based early learning	73
Goal D: An effective early childhood system	98



Supporting implementation

Supporting implementation	146
Processes for reporting on implementation	153
Implementation challenges, risks and mitigations	154



Erin, age 5



FOREWORDS



TAOISEACH'S FOREWORD

Approximately 60,000 babies are born in Ireland every year. If we take the right steps in their earliest months and years, these children have the best chance to enjoy happy, healthy childhoods on the way to becoming happy, healthy adults.

Every child deserves the best start in life.

Right across Government, we are working together to improve opportunities for children and their families.

First 5 places a renewed emphasis on children and families, putting them firmly at the heart of our work. We are delivering on commitments made in the Programme for a Partnership Government.

The Strategy includes ambitious but achievable goals to strengthen families and communities, to ensure optimal physical and mental health and to provide every child with positive play-based learning opportunities during these formative early years.

This Implementation Plan 2019-2021 highlights the partnerships that will be forged across Government Departments, State Agencies and the Community and Voluntary Sectors to achieve our goals.

It sets in motion the actions that will be undertaken in the first three years with our success measured annually against the achievement of our stated milestones.

I look forward to monitoring progress as we work to ensure that every child is given the best chance to succeed.



Leo Varadkar TD

AN TAOISEACH

MINISTER'S FOREWORD

As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I am delighted to publish the First 5 Implementation Plan (2019-2021).

This ambitious three-year plan demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that every child experiences a positive childhood. It sets us on the course towards fully realising the vision of First 5, the ten-year whole-of-Government, whole-of-society strategy for babies, young children and their families. The initial pages of this document set out the First 5 Big Steps to achieving change and describe the Strategy's vision for early childhood.

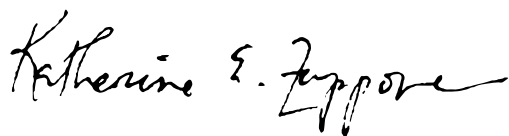
The plan describes the bold steps we will now take to reform the architecture of early childhood services over the next decade, ensuring that children have the necessary supports in life to develop to their full potential.

I am very grateful to the Inter-Departmental Group which was established to oversee the development of this Plan. The Group represents a broad cross-sectoral membership of Government Departments and State Agencies and is expertly chaired by my Department.

The development of this Implementation Plan has been iterative, collaborative and consultative and, in this context, I would like to acknowledge the important role played by the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Structures and, in particular, the Advisory Council.

As we move to deliver this Implementation Plan, my Department will continue to provide leadership of this collective effort and I, along with my officials, look forward to continued collaboration with colleagues across Government Departments, State Agencies, the Community and Voluntary Sector and wider partners in the pursuit of better outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

I am truly confident that we can all work together to make Ireland the best place in the world to grow up.



Dr Katherine Zappone TD
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

SUMMARY



FIRST 5 BIG STEPS

1 Access to a broader range of options for parents to balance working and caring

In order to ensure children can spend more time with their parents, especially in the first year, First 5 sets out plans to develop a new parental leave scheme. This will deliver extended entitlements to paid leave for both fathers and mothers. This scheme will be accompanied by a range of measures to develop greater family-friendly flexible working arrangements.

2 A new model of parenting support

First 5 will streamline and improve existing parenting supports provided across a range of Government Departments and State Agencies. Accessible, high-quality information and guidance will be made available for parents to promote healthy behaviours, facilitate positive play-based early learning and create the conditions to form and maintain strong parent-child relationships. A continuum of parenting services – ranging from universal to targeted – including high-quality parenting programmes, will also be made available. A new Parenting Unit has been established by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to lead this important work.

3 New developments in child health

A key action will be the development of a dedicated child health workforce, focussed initially in areas of high population density and disadvantage. The Strategy also sets out new measures to promote positive health behaviours and the mental health of babies, young children and their families, and to enhance the National Healthy Childhood Programme. The delivery of these measures will be led by the Healthy Ireland Office in the Department of Health in partnership with other key Government Departments and State Agencies.

4 Reform of the Early Learning and Care (ELC) system

First 5 builds on the very significant developments in Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare over recent years and seeks to further improve affordability, accessibility and quality. Measures include: introducing the National Childcare Scheme, moving progressively towards a graduate-led professional ELC workforce, the extension of regulations and supports to all paid childminders and school-age childcare services, and the introduction of a new funding model for ELC. Under this model, employers will be supported to provide more favourable working conditions that will attract and retain staff. These reforms will be underpinned by a strengthened governance structure at a national and local level.

5 A package of measures to tackle early childhood poverty

First 5 identifies new measures that will address poverty in early childhood. These include expanded access to free and subsidised Early Learning and Care, extension to the Warmth and Wellbeing and Warmer Homes Schemes, Community Cooking Programmes and the introduction of a meals programme to some ELC settings. In addition, the introduction of a DEIS-type model for ELC settings will create further opportunities to narrow the gap for disadvantaged children.



Ciara, age 4

THE STORY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Vision

All babies' and young children's early years will be valued as a critical and distinct period which should be enjoyed. Families will be assisted and enabled to nurture babies and young children and support their development, with additional support for those who need it. Those providing services for babies, young children and their families will be equipped to contribute to their learning, development, health and wellbeing. Community contexts will help babies and young children make the most of their early years and fulfil their potential.

In the opening pages of the First 5 Strategy, an optimum vision for early childhood is sketched out. First 5 and this Implementation Plan aim to make this vision a reality.

The vision is based on the most important chapters in young children's lives: good health in early childhood that starts in pregnancy, time with parents in a nurturing and playful home environment where material needs are met, high-quality play-based Early Learning and Care experiences, positive transitions to primary school, and a supportive, inclusive, wider community context.

A well-functioning early childhood system ensures maximum support in all of these areas for babies and young children.

The First 5 Strategy sets out how to develop a system of integrated, cross-sectoral and high-quality supports and services – an effective early childhood system¹ – that will help all babies and young children in Ireland to have positive early experiences. The Strategy explains why this system should be developed, what it should look like, and most importantly, the necessary actions.

The family is considered throughout First 5 across all areas given its critical role in supporting positive experiences for young children.

The early years journey is exciting and important. Let's make sure that this is a great story for all children.



A healthy childhood starting from pregnancy

Learning starts before birth. What happens before conception and during pregnancy impacts child development^{2,3}. Early health checks can identify problems before they develop. The right type of services at the right time can make all the difference^{4,5}.

An effective early childhood system will support parents to prepare well for pregnancy, access good quality antenatal care, make healthy choices during pregnancy and have positive birth experiences. This means making available high-quality information resources, and enhancing health services, including additional contacts with expectant mothers, to ensure excellent maternity care⁶.

In a child's early months and years, an effective early childhood system will support parents to form strong attachments, maintain positive mental health, make healthy choices, and will provide child health reviews, vaccinations and screening on a universal basis. Children with additional needs will be identified as early as possible, and receive appropriate support^{7,8}.



Time together with parents especially in the first year in a nurturing and playful home environment where children's material needs are met

The parent–child relationship, inter-parental relationships, and the home environment⁹ are the foundations of early childhood development¹⁰. The phase before a child's third birthday is particularly important for the growing brain. Breastmilk is the gold standard of infant nutrition¹¹. Babies benefit most from individual attention from a loving and responsive caregiver, enabling them to form strong bonds. Throughout and after these vital months, nurturing family relationships^{12,13}, along with play and discovery, are at the heart of a child's development¹⁴.

Parents' employment circumstances – whether they work outside the home or not, where they work, when they work and how much they earn – have huge implications for children¹⁵, not least because of the value young children and parents alike place on time spent together as a family¹⁶.

An effective early childhood system will enable children to be cared for at home by fathers and mothers during their first year through more generous parental leave entitlements. It will support mothers to begin, and continue, breastfeeding and equip parents to understand and support child development, nutrition and safety and promote early learning and play. More intensive interventions will support vulnerable families to overcome short- or long-term challenges¹⁷.



An effective early childhood system will give parents choices about balancing working and caring. That means access to family-friendly arrangements that support work-life balance, and ensuring that income from work is sufficient to support a family, supplementing it where necessary so that all families have adequate resources and children’s material needs are met. It also means making Early Learning and Care, of different types, affordable and of high quality so that participation in employment, whether full time or part time, is a viable option for parents, in the confidence that their children are being well cared for¹⁸.

High-quality play-based Early Learning and Care (ELC) experiences

Many young children spend much of their day being cared for by those other than their parents. Non-parental care can be provided by a combination of wider family members and home- or centre-based ELC. The individuals involved in providing learning and care are the key determinant of quality and, for children to thrive, the carers must be equipped to foster the types of relationships and create environments that characterise positive experiences. High-quality ELC is particularly valuable for children who have challenges at home.

An effective early childhood system will ensure that those caring for young children are equipped to support early childhood development. In the case of care by family, friends and neighbours, this means making information, resources and supports more widely available in the local community. In more formal, paid-for provision, this means an appropriately qualified and valued workforce, a consistently implemented curriculum framework and adherence to quality standards and regulations¹⁹, particularly for publicly subsidised ELC.



Positive transitions to primary school

The move to primary education is a major transition in young children’s lives. A smooth transition can ensure a positive start to school for children. Important factors are the age at which a child starts school, the structure of the learning environment and the supports provided by parents, ELC practitioners and teachers²⁰.

An effective early childhood system will support the transition to school by enabling greater communication between ELC settings, primary schools and parents, particularly for children with additional needs; supporting more play-based, child-centred learning in the early years of primary school; equipping primary schools to accommodate young children through smaller class sizes, more time and space to play, and interactive teaching styles²¹.



Supportive community contexts

The community in which babies, young children and their families live is the backdrop for development throughout the early years and shapes daily experiences²².

An effective early childhood system will ensure that communities are inclusive, with places to play and learn, opportunities for parents and young children to meet, and comprehensive supports and services that foster early development and respond to additional needs, proactively engaging all children and parents²³.

This means community public space designed with babies and young children in mind, support for parent and toddler groups and other places for young families to meet, along with integrated services where the workforce within and across health, Early Learning and Care, primary education and family support services share a common language and work together²⁴.



Katelyn, age 3

A VISION for EARLY CHILDHOOD

A HEALTHY CHILDHOOD STARTING FROM PREGNANCY



NURTURING AND PLAYFUL HOME ENVIRONMENT WHERE MATERIAL NEEDS ARE MET

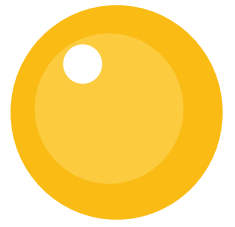


TIME TOGETHER WITH PARENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIRST YEAR





**HIGH-QUALITY
PLAY-BASED EARLY
LEARNING AND
CARE EXPERIENCES**



AND



INTEGRATED



SERVICES



**POSITIVE
TRANSITIONS TO
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

First 5 AT A GLANCE

Goals

A

Strong and supportive families and communities

B

Optimum physical and mental health

C

Positive play-based early learning

D

An effective early childhood system

Objectives

1. Balance working and caring

2. Information, services and supports for parents

3. Practical and material resources

4. Positive health behaviours

5. High-quality health services

6. Positive mental health

7. Positive home learning environment

8. Affordable, high-quality Early Learning and Care

9. Supported transitions

1

Building Block 1:
Leadership, governance, collaboration

Strategic Actions

- 1.A Implementation and governance
- 1.B Early childhood system leadership
- 1.C Collaborative projects

2

Building Block 2:
Regulation, inspection, quality assurance

Strategic Actions

- 2.A Develop, enhance, implement standards
- 2.B Reform regulation and inspection

Strategic Actions

1.1 Parental care for children particularly during the first year	1.2 Family-friendly flexible working	
2.1 Information and resources for parents	2.2 Tiered model of parenting support	
3.1 Measures to address family income and early childhood poverty	3.2 Suitable accommodation for families with children	3.3 Child-friendly communities

4.1 Positive health behaviours in families	4.2 Health behaviour supports in child-serving settings and communities	4.3 Child safety and injury prevention
5.1 Develop National Healthy Childhood Programme	5.2 Therapeutic and medical care for babies and children	
6.1 Early identification of mental health issues	6.2 Access to mental health supports	

7.1 Playful home learning environments	7.2 Parental engagement in children's early learning	7.3 Participation in out-of-home learning
8.1 Affordable high-quality ELC	8.2 Availability of subsidised high-quality ELC	8.3 ELC that promotes participation, social inclusion and diversity
9.1 Information exchange to support transitions	9.2 Continuity between ELC and primary settings	9.3 Supports to sustain learning during transitions



Building Block 3: Skilled and sustainable workforce

Strategic Actions

- 3.A Identify and address staff requirements
- 3.B Improve initial training and CPD for all early childhood staff
- 3.C Professionalise ELC; support employers to attract and retain high-quality workforce



Building Block 4: Research, data, monitoring and evaluation

Strategic Actions

- 4.A Support early childhood research
- 4.B Develop administrative and outcomes data
- 4.C Robust monitoring



Building Block 5: Strategic investment

Strategic Actions

- 5.A Public funding
- 5.B Strategic investment
- 5.C Tracking progress

INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

First 5, the 10-year whole-of-government, whole-of-society strategy for babies, young children and their families was published in November 2018 fulfilling a key action in Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF): the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014–2020).

First 5 focuses on the period of early childhood, from the antenatal period to age five, and takes a joined-up, cross-government approach to supporting babies, young children and their families during these critical early years.

The Strategy identifies more than 150 initial actions across Government Departments²⁵ which will be substantially progressed in the initial implementation phase from 2019 to 2021. There are a number of very significant and far-reaching reform projects committed to in First 5 and these will require significant foundational groundwork and planning, including scoping, generation of research evidence, stakeholder engagement, piloting and evaluation in order to ensure that their implementation is successful. Data and evidence will underpin and guide the implementation of First 5 throughout and it is essential that decisions about implementation, particularly on the actions to drive major systems change, are based on strong and sound information. Much of this foundational work is expected to be undertaken within the initial implementation period. For reasons of prioritisation, resources and other considerations, the sequencing of some actions will not begin in 2019 but all will be significantly advanced in this first phase of implementation.

The First 5 Implementation Plan (2019–2021):

- Provides a summary overview of First 5, including the major actions to be delivered;
- Identifies the lead and partner(s) who will implement initial actions and articulates the key output to be achieved by 2021 for each action, alongside a clear schedule of associated annual milestones;



- Provides an overview of the structures that will support implementation;
- Describes the processes for reporting on implementation; and
- Summarises implementation challenges, risks and mitigations.

The Implementation Plan, in setting out milestones for 2019, 2020 and 2021, is a key mechanism to plan and sequence the actions, as well as to communicate more widely about what is likely to be advanced when.

The development of the First 5 Implementation Plan (2019–2021) was led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and overseen by the First 5 Inter-Departmental Group. This Group was reconvened with membership extended to relevant State Agencies, specifically the Health Services Executive and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. This Group agreed the broad structure of the Implementation Plan and its individual members engaged with officials within their respective Departments, State Agencies and with partners (where appropriate) to examine their actions, agree key outputs over the initial implementation phase and chart the associated milestones for the period 2019–2021. The development of the Implementation Plan was also supported by the BOBF Advisory Council.



Holly, age 4

OVERVIEW OF FIRST 5

Vision, Goals, Principles and Framework for Action

Vision

All babies' and young children's early years will be valued as a critical and distinct period which should be enjoyed. Families will be assisted and enabled to nurture babies and young children and support their development, with additional support for those who need it. Those providing services for babies, young children and their families will be equipped to contribute to their learning, development, health and wellbeing. Community contexts will help babies and young children make the most of their early years and fulfil their potential.

Goals

- Goal A: Strong and supportive families and communities
- Goal B: Optimum physical and mental health
- Goal C: Positive play-based early learning
- Goal D: An effective early childhood system



Anna, age 5

Principles

The principles which underpin First 5 are drawn from Right from the Start.

- Early childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right.
- Relationships and interactions with significant others, and the environments in which they take place, play a central role in the quality of children’s experiences in early childhood.
- Services and supports to children and their families should be of a high quality, affordable and accessible to all, while recognising that some children and families will need additional support.
- The provision of quality services requires everyone working with children and families to communicate and cooperate with one another and with children and families in an atmosphere of mutual respect and common purpose/partnership.
- Society must value and support parents, guardians, families and everyone who promotes the wellbeing, learning and development of young children.
- Government policies pertaining to children should be informed by evidence, by international standards of best practice and by children’s rights.



Alanna, age 5

Framework for action

The four Goals will be delivered through nine interlocking Objectives (under Goals A, B and C) and five Building Blocks (under Goal D). Under each Objective and Building Block, Strategic Actions are set out. This is the framework for action for the duration of First 5 and forms the basis to monitor implementation. Over 150 actions to be progressed over the first three years have been identified. By and large, these actions represent additionality and will complement existing work.

As a living Strategy with a built-in review after three years, it is expected that new specific actions for delivery in the medium- to long-term will be added as implementation progresses. Implementation will include a First 5 Trials programme and a First 5 Research and Evaluation programme.

The First 5 Trials programme will explore innovative initiatives to test effectiveness in an Irish context, and determine suitability for nationwide implementation.

The First 5 Research and Evaluation programme will support these trials, and deepen understanding of the lives of young children and their families and the services and supports that will make the most difference to them.



Ethan, age 4

ACTIONS AND MILESTONES TABLES



GOAL A STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1

Parents will be assisted to balance working and caring to contribute to optimum child development and to best suit their family circumstances.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.1 Facilitate mothers and fathers to care for their child at home during their first year.	A.1.1.1. A new paid Parental Leave scheme available to both parents will be established and operational by 2019. Following its establishment, the new Parental Leave scheme will aim to build incrementally over the course of the Strategy so that by 2028 parents in Ireland will be supported to look after their babies at home for the whole of their first year through a combination of paid family leave schemes. By 2021 parents will each have an individual entitlement to seven weeks of paid parental leave, which can be taken during their child's earliest years, to potentially allow children to benefit from an additional 14 weeks parental care in their first year. Over the remaining years of the Strategy, as resources allow, the paid Parental Leave scheme will be further extended. Once the new scheme is established, consideration will be given to reviewing Maternity and Paternity Leave/Benefit schemes, particularly in respect of rates of payment and eligibility requirements. Further efforts to promote uptake of leave entitlements may also be required.	Joint Leads: DJE and DEASP	Parents each have an individual entitlement to seven weeks of paid parental leave, which can be taken during their child's earliest years, to potentially allow children to benefit from an additional 14 weeks parental care in their first year.	Legislation to be progressed and enacted to allow the scheme to commence. DEASP to design, implement and operate a corresponding scheme to allow parents to take paid parental leave. Introduction of individual entitlement to two weeks of paid parental leave (up to a potential four weeks in total per child).	Period of paid parental leave increased having regard to financial and resource considerations by the Government.	Period of paid parental leave increased to seven weeks per parent, having regard to financial and resource considerations by the Government.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1

Parents will be assisted to balance working and caring to contribute to optimum child development and to best suit their family circumstances.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.2 Enhance access to family-friendly flexible working.	A.1.2.1. Undertake a review of the relevant provisions of the 2004 Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act on the issue of extending current entitlement to paid breastfeeding/lactation breaks or paid reduction in working hours for breastfeeding mothers in the workforce from 26 to 104 weeks after the baby's birth to facilitate the combination of breastfeeding and working in line with the WHO recommendation to continue breastfeeding, in combination with suitably nutritious and safe complementary foods, until children are two years old.	Lead: DJE	Breastfeeding mothers in the workforce entitled to breastfeeding/ lactation breaks for up to 104 weeks following the birth of their child.	Development of proposals for required legislative measures to introduce this provision through the Parental Leave and Benefit Bill. Review of existing provisions to be considered in the context of pre-legislative scrutiny for the Bill.	Extension of entitlement made, subject to legislative approval.	
	A.1.2.2. Extend provision for unpaid parental leave from 18 to 26 weeks and amend the upper age limit of the child for which the leave can be taken from 8 to 12 allowing for greater flexibility for parents.	Lead: DJE	Parents of all children up to the age of 12 are entitled to 26 weeks of unpaid parental leave.	Current entitlement to unpaid parental leave extended from 18 to 22 weeks and age of the child for which leave can be taken increased from 8 to 12.	Further extension of four weeks so that entitlement is increased to 26 weeks in total.	

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1

Parents will be assisted to balance working and caring to contribute to optimum child development and to best suit their family circumstances.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>1.2</p> <p>Enhance access to family-friendly flexible working.</p>	<p>A.1.2.3.</p> <p>Undertake a review of existing statutory and non-statutory policies and research on their effectiveness in supporting family-friendly and flexible working for parents with young children. On the basis of findings of review and research, develop guidance and tools to facilitate employers to offer more family-friendly working options, so that over the course of the Strategy employment legislation, culture and practice enables parents to balance working with caring, while also promoting gender equality.</p>	<p>Lead: DJE</p> <p>Partners: DBEI, DCYA, DEASP</p>	<p>Employment legislation, culture and practice better enable parents of young children to balance working and caring roles.</p>	<p>Develop policy approach on work-life balance that includes an examination of good practice in other EU Member States.</p> <p>Undertake the preparatory work for a national consultation on the extension of flexible working options for all employees.</p> <p>Preparation initiated for transposition of provisions in forthcoming EU Directive on Work Life Balance (WLB) including in respect of parents' entitlement to request flexible working arrangements.</p>	<p>Hold a national consultation on the extension of flexible working options for all employees.</p> <p>Develop guidance to facilitate employers to offer more family-friendly working options, promoting the adoption of flexible and /or remote working solutions and structures for parents.</p> <p>Disseminate the guidance to employers.</p> <p>Disseminate the findings of the consultation process.</p> <p>Continued work to transpose provisions in EU WLB Directive.</p>	<p>Transposition of provisions in EU WLB Directive completed in line with the anticipated three-year timeframe.</p>

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 1

Parents will be assisted to balance working and caring to contribute to optimum child development and to best suit their family circumstances.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.2 Enhance access to family-friendly flexible working.	A.1.2.4. Building on the innovative Athena Swan model in the higher education sector and experience from other countries, develop a system to recognise family-friendly employers, in line with preliminary work underway to consider the feasibility and benefits of an “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mark” for business.	Lead: DJE Partner: DBEI	System to recognise family-friendly employers developed and in operation.	Initial scoping of potential project, in tandem with developments on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mark underway.	Following on from scoping, options developed of different approaches to recognise family-friendly employers and preferred model selected. Initial testing of selected model.	Refinements to selected model based on testing and wider rollout initiated.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 2

Parents will benefit from high-quality, evidence-based information and services on various aspects of parenting to support child development and positive family relationships along a continuum of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
2.1 Lead collaboration across Government Departments and State Agencies to develop, design and disseminate information resources to support parenting.	A.2.1.1. Consolidate, streamline and strengthen parenting information resources into a single, coherent platform, to ensure consistent, high-quality and accessible information and develop userfriendly, attractive, high-quality information resources across multiple platforms, building on the suite of existing resources.	Lead: DCYA Partners: All relevant Government Departments and Agencies	High-quality, consistent parenting information resources available to meet parents' requirements. See also action B.4.1.5.	State-funded parenting information resources identified. Engagement with providers and parents commenced. Background papers prepared.	Project plan developed and commenced. Working group established. Options appraisal completed and preferred option agreed. Work on preferred option commenced.	Testing of proposed changes with parents completed. Consolidation and streamlining of existing parenting information resources completed. Measures for ongoing monitoring of the provision of parenting information agreed.
	A.2.1.2. Lead a national public information campaign on positive parenting. The online and offline campaign should include practical messages and suggestions for parents and signposting to available information resources and services.	Lead: DCYA Partner: Government Information Service	Public information campaign conducted.	Schedule of campaigns agreed (see action C.7.1.1). Phase 1 background papers prepared. Phase 1 evidence reviews completed. Communications workshop held. Campaign objectives and scope agreed.	Communications advice secured. Project plan developed and commenced. Phase 2 background papers prepared. Phase 2 evidence reviews completed.	Information campaign strategy completed. Network of Department, Agency and NGO staff involved with parenting support established to share, disseminate and promote best practice. Public information campaign commenced.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 2

Parents will benefit from high-quality, evidence-based information and services on various aspects of parenting to support child development and positive family relationships along a continuum of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.1</p> <p>Lead collaboration across Government Departments and State Agencies to develop, design and disseminate information resources to support parenting.</p>	<p>A.2.1.3.</p> <p>Pilot the development and implementation of Baby Boxes and Book Bags initiatives to support parenting with a focus on parent-baby bonding, information on baby development and early learning and promotion of baby safety.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: To be determined on establishment of Oversight Group</p>	<p>Pilot complete and preliminary findings from evaluation available to inform next steps.</p>	<p>Establish Oversight Group.</p> <p>Identify partner to lead on pilot.</p>	<p>Pilot design agreed.</p> <p>Pre-pilot consultation completed.</p> <p>Scoping paper published.</p> <p>Evaluation partners in place.</p>	<p>Pilot underway.</p> <p>Concurrent evaluation of pilot underway.</p>

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 2

Parents will benefit from high-quality, evidence-based information and services on various aspects of parenting to support child development and positive family relationships along a continuum of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.2</p> <p>Develop a tiered model of parenting services built on a foundation of universal provision, with extra support available for parents in line with their level of need on a progressive basis.</p>	<p>A.2.2.1.</p> <p>Develop a national model of parenting services, from universal to targeted provision, covering key stages of child development, taking account of parents and children in a range of contexts and parenting relationships. Universal parenting services under the model will be based on two key foundations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the further development of the HSE's National Healthy Childhood Programme in providing services for parents and babies (antenatal to age three), and the development of ELC services as a delivery mechanism to provide supports for parents. This will be planned and resourced through a reformed funding model and piloted. <p>Over and above this, and building on the current PHN home visitation programme, an approach to home visiting services, across a continuum of need, will be agreed, having regard to Irish evidence on the implementation of prevention and early intervention initiatives.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: Tusla, HSE and voluntary sector</p>	<p>National model of parenting services agreed with all key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Study on parents' perspective and support needs commissioned.</p> <p>Background papers prepared, including review of existing parenting supports.</p> <p>Evidence reviews completed.</p>	<p>Project plan developed and commenced.</p> <p>Expert group, led by DCYA, established to develop national model with associated funding model.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement process underway.</p> <p>Parents' perspectives and support needs study finalised.</p> <p>Developments on National Healthy Childhood Programme are dealt with further under Strategic Action 5.1.</p> <p>In the context of the New Funding Model for ELC/SAC, consider options for resourcing the delivery of parenting programmes through ELC to contribute to the development of the national model of parenting services.</p>	<p>Development of national model of parenting services completed.</p> <p>Government approval of national model of parenting services including home visiting.</p>

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 2

Parents will benefit from high-quality, evidence-based information and services on various aspects of parenting to support child development and positive family relationships along a continuum of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
2.2 Develop a tiered model of parenting services built on a foundation of universal provision, with extra support available for parents in line with their level of need on a progressive basis.	A.2.2.2. Sustain the Tulsa Prevention, Partnership and Family Support programme through continued investment.	Lead: Tulsa Partner: DCYA	Sustainable programme of prevention and early intervention within Tulsa to include area-based work with an emphasis on child poverty which supports the targeted work within Tulsa.	Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Operational Plan agreed. Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme integrated into PPFS.	Implementation of new PPFS Operational Plan and greater integration within Tulsa.	Continued implementation of PPFS Operational Plan and integration within Tulsa.
	A.2.2.3. Continue to implement the Tulsa Transformation Programme targeted at achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children and families. In the development of policies and practice, Tulsa will have cognisance of this Strategy, the work streams relevant to child protection and welfare, and the particular vulnerabilities of the age groups covered by the Strategy.	Lead: Tulsa	Babies and young children experiencing welfare problems and their parent/ carer can access early intervention supports.	Continue to implement Signs of Safety. Child Protection training identifies the particular vulnerabilities of babies and young children.	Open child protection cases of babies and young children are prioritised for social work intervention.	Continue to implement Signs of Safety. Child Protection training identifies the particular vulnerabilities of babies and young children. Open child protection cases of babies and young children are prioritised for social work intervention.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.1 Building on the existing infrastructure of supports, review and develop initiatives to maximise the incomes of families with young children, with a particular focus on children at risk of poverty.	A.3.1.1. Undertake research and analysis of the Home Carer Tax Credit scheme, in line with the Tax Expenditure Guidelines. This will include an examination of the beneficiaries of the scheme and an assessment of the extent that it is effective at supporting working families who take care of young children at home.	Lead: DoF	Review of Home Carer Tax Credit complete and published and consideration given to the results of the review in the context of the subsequent budgets.	Carry out review of the Home Carer Credit, in line with the Tax Expenditure Guidelines.	Consideration of the results of the 2019 review in the context of Budget 2021.	Consideration of the results of the 2019 review in the context of Budget 2022.
	A.3.1.2. Commence and progress a review of the effectiveness and accessibility of arrangements for recovery of maintenance payments by non-resident parents, including an examination of arrangements in other jurisdictions to ascertain the possibilities for making the maintenance recovery process easier for parents, improving the outcomes for children and reducing as far as possible the need for court proceedings for maintenance recovery. Review to be commenced within two years of the publication of the Strategy.	Lead: DJE	Review completed or close to completion.	Scoping of review process. Preliminary engagement with relevant Government Departments and State Agencies.	Appropriate and effective structures put in place for the review. Analysis undertaken of existing maintenance recovery arrangements in Ireland and arrangements in other jurisdictions. Consultations commenced.	Progress on the review. Development of policy options and proposals.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.1 Building on the existing infrastructure of supports, review and develop initiatives to maximise the incomes of families with young children, with a particular focus on children at risk of poverty.	A.3.1.3. Develop schemes to address energy poverty; continue to target young children with respiratory conditions in consideration of the extension, evaluation and possible mainstreaming of the Warmth and Wellbeing scheme and explore ways to make the benefits of the Warmer Homes Scheme available to more families of young children who are in or at risk of energy poverty, including in the rental sector.	Lead: DCCAE	Final report on the Warmth and Wellbeing pilot scheme to be published.	Schemes to address energy poverty funded with €31m. Initial results of the Warmth and Wellbeing pilot to be used to inform future rollout of the scheme, and help determine whether there are benefits for younger children. Consultation on policy to address energy efficiency in the rental sector to be published, responses analysed and a draft policy recommendation made to the Minister. Final National Energy and Climate Plan submitted to the European Commission, detailing measures to address energy poverty in Ireland.	Continue to fund and develop schemes to address energy poverty, including among families with young children.	Continue to fund and develop schemes to address energy poverty, including among families with young children.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.2 Support the development of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of babies, young children and their families.	A.3.2.1. In line with the policies outlined in Rebuilding Ireland, the Government's Action Plan on housing and homelessness, implement a range of actions to ensure an increased supply of social, affordable and private homes so that children and their families are provided with suitable accommodation.	Lead: DHPLG	Rebuilding Ireland will have provided over 50,000 new social housing homes and nearly 140,000 social housing solutions by the end of 2021; increased delivery of private homes; and a strong and effectively regulated private rental market.	27,000 social housing solutions to be delivered.	25,000 social housing solutions to be delivered.	22,000 social housing solutions to be delivered.
	A.3.2.2. Provide increased accommodation facilities appropriate for families experiencing homelessness and ensure that the appropriate supports are provided to these families to support them being re-homed in suitable homes within the shortest possible timeframe and having regard to their individual requirements and circumstances.	Lead: DHPLG	All emergency accommodation and services provided in accordance with standards set out in the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF). Reduced time in emergency accommodation for families experiencing homelessness.	Deliver additional family hubs in Dublin and other main urban centres. Commencement of phased implementation of the NQSF for the provision of homeless services to commence.	All State-funded emergency accommodation is in accordance with the NQSF.	Dependent on 2020 developments.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.2</p> <p>Support the development of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>A.3.2.3.</p> <p>Following consultation process, publish standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process to ensure that the delivery of services and supports for people living in this type of accommodation, including babies, young children and their parents, is of high quality, appropriate, safe and effective.</p>	<p>Lead: DJE</p>	<p>Analyse and review the on-boarding of the standards.</p> <p>Ensure full compliance is adhered to through the independent inspector process.</p> <p>Report on findings through the implementation project.</p> <p>Improved living facilities available to all living in accommodation provided by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) through the implementation of the standards.</p>	<p>Standards finalised.</p> <p>Continue to roll out the independent living model as part of a nationwide procurement programme.</p> <p>Formation of an implementation working group.</p> <p>Public procurement exercise for the provision of accommodation and ancillary services to persons in the protection process, by way of the independent living model initiated.</p>	<p>Scoping various aspects of the development of the implementation process.</p> <p>Rollout of remaining agreed standards across all centres.</p> <p>Inspection regime agreed and implemented.</p> <p>Completion of public procurement exercise to ensure improvement in living conditions and catering facilities.</p>	<p>Monitor the continuous rollout of improvements to the delivery of services as described in the standards document.</p> <p>Continuous review of the model to ensure all aspects are embedded in the agreed timeframe.</p> <p>Review and report on public procurement process finalised in 2020.</p>

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.2 Support the development of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of babies, young children and their families.	A.3.2.4. Make specific recommendations on access to appropriate accommodation for Traveller families with babies and young children, having regard to the work of the recently established Expert Group who have been tasked with examining and making recommendations on Traveller accommodation policy, strategy and implementation including reviewing the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and all other legislation that impacts on the provision and delivery of accommodation for Travellers.	Lead: DHPLG	Increased delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation.	Submission of the report of the Expert Group established to examine the delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation.	Implementation of policy responses arising from the recommendations of the Expert Group.	Increased delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.3 Ensure that the design and development of physical and social infrastructure takes account of the needs and rights of babies, young children and their families so that communities where children are born and grow up support positive early development.	A.3.3.1. Develop guidelines on planning and developing child-friendly communities for local authorities. The guidelines will focus on building sustainable communities that ensure that children have safe environments to play, explore and learn. These will include recommendations on amenity space, appropriate scale, walking and cycling routes, and public spaces including play spaces and natural environments.	Lead: DHPLG Partner: DCYA	Guidelines in place and integrated into local authority statutory planning processes.	Review of existing guidelines completed by DHPLG, in conjunction with DCYA.	Scoping and consideration of policy objectives on child-friendly communities undertaken, with reference to Unicef principles and themes for Child Friendly Cities and the National Planning Framework.	Progress initiatives to support increased emphasis on children in planning including through guidelines.
	A.3.3.2. Conduct a mapping exercise of current play policy, practice and provision with a focus on early childhood and on the basis of findings make recommendations for future actions.	Lead: DCYA	Mapping exercise of current play policy, practice and provision finalised and process initiated to inform future policy developments.		Carry out mapping exercise of current play policy, practice and provision with a focus on early childhood.	Finalise mapping exercise. Initiate process to develop recommendations for future action.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.3</p> <p>Ensure that the design and development of physical and social infrastructure takes account of the needs and rights of babies, young children and their families so that communities where children are born and grow up support positive early development.</p>	<p>A.3.3.3.</p> <p>Invest in libraries as community hubs, across the country, with a particular focus on young children and their parents (parent and baby groups, materials for parents, development of children's sections), in line with implementation of the new library strategy.</p>	<p>Lead: DRCD</p> <p>Partners: DCYA, Local Authorities, Libraries Development, LGMA</p>	<p>National structured library literacy and reading development support services to babies and young children across all local authorities.</p> <p>Approximately seven new library buildings designed in line with the national public library strategy, and Public Library Standards and Benchmarks are providing suitable and inviting spaces for babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>Explore extending structured library literacy and reading development support services to babies and young children under the Right to Read programme.</p> <p>Library projects funded under the Library Capital Investment Programme, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund are in line with the national public library strategy and Public Library Standards and Benchmarks including providing suitable and inviting spaces for babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>Detailed project plan agreed to extend library literacy and reading development support services to babies and young children under the Right to Read programme.</p> <p>Three new library builds/refurbishments are opened providing suitable and inviting spaces for babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>Implement the structured library literacy and reading development support services to babies and young children across all local authorities.</p> <p>Four new library builds/refurbishments are opened providing suitable and inviting spaces for babies, young children and their families.</p>

Outputs and milestones continued overleaf.

GOAL A

Strong and supportive families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Families and communities will be supported to provide children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in the early years.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.3</p> <p>Ensure that the design and development of physical and social infrastructure takes account of the needs and rights of babies, young children and their families so that communities where children are born and grow up support positive early development.</p>			<p>First 5 in Your Library in operation.</p>		<p>Building on the success of Healthy Ireland in Your Library, explore the concept of First 5 in Your Library as a valuable source within the community for information on early childhood with support from DCYA.</p>	<p>Dependent on 2020 developments, further roll out First 5 in Your Library initiative.</p>

GOAL B OPTIMUM PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH



GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.1</p> <p>Promote and support positive health behaviours among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>B.4.1.1.</p> <p>Continue progress towards the breastfeeding target rate set out in the National Breastfeeding Action Plan (i.e. annual 2% increase in breastfeeding duration rates over the period 2016–2021). To meet this target</p> <p>a) continue to support mothers to breastfeed through the PHN service,</p> <p>b) implement standardised breastfeeding policies and</p> <p>c) provide clinical specialist posts in both primary care and maternity hospitals as per the key actions of the National Breastfeeding Action Plan. Extensions to this target will be considered at the end-of-year-three review of First 5 in 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: HSE</p> <p>Partner: DoH</p>	<p>An increase in breastfeeding rates through:</p> <p>a) Blended learning breastfeeding training programme available.</p> <p>Evidence-based information available to mothers through a range of media.</p> <p>b) Up-to-date infant feeding policies for maternity hospitals/units and primary care teams implemented.</p> <p>Code of Marketing for Breastmilk substitutes.</p> <p>Breastfeeding policy for staff working in the public health service in place.</p> <p>Baby Friendly Initiative in place.</p> <p>c) Additional clinical specialist posts in place.</p> <p>Breastfeeding rates meeting Breastfeeding Action Plan (2016–2021) targets.</p> <p>Review of implementation of Breastfeeding Action Plan 2016–2021.</p>	<p>a) Blended learning breastfeeding training programme developed.</p> <p>Online and print resources available to mothers and PHNs.</p> <p>b) Infant feeding policies for maternity hospitals/units and primary care teams developed and implemented.</p> <p>HSE policy and guide for staff on the Code of Marketing for Breastmilk substitutes available.</p> <p>Baby Friendly Initiative standards completed.</p> <p>Breastfeeding policy for staff working in the public health service developed.</p> <p>c) Review of current provision of clinical specialist posts completed.</p> <p>Submission made for additional posts through the estimates process and funding dependent.</p>	<p>a) Framework and implementation plan for breastfeeding training programme developed.</p> <p>Continue to review and update information sources and develop new support services.</p> <p>b) Breastfeeding policy for staff working in the public health service implemented, in line with the review of the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004.</p> <p>Audit of breastfeeding assessment complete.</p> <p>Implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative progressed in maternity hospitals/units.</p> <p>c) Additional clinical specialist posts provided and funding dependent.</p>	<p>a) Blended learning breastfeeding training programme available.</p> <p>Evidence-based information available to mothers through a range of media.</p> <p>b) Review of compliance with relevant breastfeeding policies completed.</p> <p>c) Additional clinical specialist posts provided and funding dependent.</p>

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.1 Promote and support positive health behaviours among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families.	B.4.1.2. Enhance weaning support to parents through the National Healthy Childhood Programme.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Enhanced public information available on www.mychild.ie Consistent, standardised information available through the universal child health programme.	Evidence-based information on weaning available to all parents across different platforms.	Evidence-based information on weaning available to all parents across different platforms. Community-based weaning workshops provided as part of Community Cooking Programmes.	Enhanced public information available on www.mychild.ie Consistent, standardised information available through the universal child health programme. Community-based weaning workshops provided.
	B.4.1.3. Provide access to comprehensive family planning and reproductive healthcare services, including information and advice for people considering pregnancy (e.g. smoking cessation) and carry out a national information campaign to promote the importance of pre-conception health.	Lead: DoH Partner: HSE	Subject to relevant resource availability, significant progress made in the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy in accordance with the implementation plan published by the National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP). Clinical guidelines for the identification, diagnosis and treatment of tobacco addiction implemented.	Continued implementation of the National Maternity Strategy, as set out in the associated implementation plan. Draft guidelines for the identification, diagnosis and treatment of tobacco addiction released for consultation.	Continued implementation of the National Maternity Strategy, as set out in the associated implementation plan. Publication of guidelines for the identification, diagnosis and treatment of tobacco addiction.	Continued implementation of the National Maternity Strategy, as set out in the associated implementation plan. Implementation of guidelines for the identification, diagnosis and treatment of tobacco addiction.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.1 Promote and support positive health behaviours among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families.	B.4.1.4. Develop mechanisms to improve folic acid intake among all women of reproductive ages.	Lead: DoH Partners: HSE, Safefood	Neural Tube Defects (NTD) surveillance report and HSE folic acid supplementation review published.	Publish Folic Acid supplementation report. Disseminate College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Guidelines. Continue Safefood awareness campaigns.	HSE review of folic acid supplement uptake and NTD surveillance.	HSE review folic acid supplement uptake and NTD surveillance.
	B.4.1.5. Develop and maintain comprehensive, accessible information for parents on all aspects of their child's health and wellbeing through a new parenting and child health and wellbeing website supported by social media.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Parents have better access to standardised, consistent information on child health promotion and protection. See also action A.2.1.1.	Communications plan to promote www.mychild.ie implemented New content developed and launched on the website.	New content developed for the website. Digital analytics and user feedback informing development and content.	New content developed for the website. Digital analytics and user feedback informing development and content.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.1 Promote and support positive health behaviours among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families.	<p>B.4.1.6. Develop, publish and disseminate guidelines on health behaviours for babies and young children.</p> <p>a) Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1-5 Year Olds, b) Guidelines for Physical Activity for Early Childhood, and Guidelines on Sedentary Behaviour, including Guidelines on Screen Time for Early Childhood,</p> <p>c) Guidelines on Oral Health, including Dentists Visits and Toothpaste Use in Early Childhood.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DoH and HSE</p> <p>Partner: SafeFood</p>	<p>Healthy eating. Parents are supported to adopt and sustain healthy lifestyle behaviours in their families – including healthy eating.</p> <p>Physical activity. Parents are supported to adopt and sustain healthy lifestyle behaviours in families – including physical activity, reducing sedentary behaviour and screen time.</p>	<p>Healthy eating. Continue to deliver START campaign to support parents to implement healthy lifestyles in families including healthy eating messaging.</p> <p>Develop new Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1-5 Year Olds.</p> <p>Physical activity. Continue to develop and deliver START campaign to support parents to implement healthy lifestyles in families incorporating physical activity, sedentary behaviour and screen-time messaging.</p>	<p>Healthy eating. Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1-5 Year Olds used to develop Nutrition Standards for ELCs, resources for parents and content to be integrated into www.mychild.ie</p> <p>Continue to deliver START campaign.</p> <p>Physical activity. Develop Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour including screen time.</p> <p>Continue to deliver START campaign.</p>	<p>Healthy eating. Continue dissemination and promotion of Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1-5 Year Olds.</p> <p>Monitor impact of START campaign on 1-5 Year Olds.</p> <p>Monitor implementation of Guidelines.</p> <p>Continue to deliver START campaign.</p> <p>Physical activity. Content to communicate Guidelines on Physical Activity for Early Childhood, Sedentary Behaviour, Screen Time in Early Childhood developed and integrated into www.mychild.ie</p>

Outputs and milestones continued overleaf.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.1 Promote and support positive health behaviours among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families.			<p>Oral health. Families will be aware of availability of preventive oral healthcare packages for children under six.</p> <p>Improved knowledge on the use of early fluoride toothpaste usage.</p> <p>Evaluation of information campaigns will be commenced.</p>	<p>Oral health. Launch of Smile agus Sláinte – National Oral Health Policy.</p> <p>Outline of information campaign developed to signpost the availability of the preventive packages – see action below.</p> <p>Baseline assessment commenced of fluoride toothpaste use/ guideline compliance in young children.</p>	<p>Oral health. Information campaign (signposting) initiated for parents/ children in line with the introduction of packages.</p> <p>Guidelines developed on toothpaste usage by young children.</p> <p>Targeted information campaign developed on early fluoride toothpaste usage based on findings of baseline assessment and guidelines.</p>	<p>Oral health. Signposting information campaign updated, if required.</p> <p>Targeted information campaign on early fluoride toothpaste usage rolled out.</p>
	B.4.1.7. Develop a national skin cancer prevention plan with babies and young children identified as a priority group.	Lead: DoH Partners: National Cancer Control Programme, Stakeholder Implementation Group	Publish Progress Report on Skin Cancer Prevention Plan.	Launch Skin Cancer Prevention Plan.	Launch Communications Campaign.	Review progress.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.2 Integrate health behaviour supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.4.2.1. Review and enhance the delivery of Healthy Ireland Smart Start (HISS) Programme, working with ELC settings to support the development of child health and wellbeing, through phased expansion of this Programme to all ELC settings and extension of this Programme to children under three.	Lead: HSE Partners: National Childhood Network, DoH, DCYA	An enhanced programme in ELC settings to support the development of health and wellbeing among children under six.	Continued rollout of the existing HISS Programme to ELC settings. Commence review of the HISS Programme.	Continued roll out of the existing HISS Programme to ELC settings. Complete review and develop recommendations for an enhanced programme in ELC settings to support the development of health and wellbeing among children under 6.	Implement recommendations.
	B.4.2.2. Extend the Community Based Nutrition and Cooking Programmes.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Parents have greater access to community-based training to develop nutrition and cooking skills.	Revised model for delivery of Community Cooking Programmes by HSE developed.	Delivery of Community Cooking programmes under revised model.	Increased availability of and participation in Community Based Nutrition and Cooking Programmes.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.2 Integrate health behaviour supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	<p>B.4.2.3. Introduce measures to address food poverty, specifically: Pilot a meals programme in ELC settings.</p> <p>Pilot a new hot meals programme for DEIS primary schools.</p>	<p>Meals in ELC Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: DoH, HSE, Tusla, CCCs</p> <p>Hot meals in schools Joint Leads: DEASP and DES</p>	<p>Meals in ELC Evaluation report published.</p> <p>Pilot programme completed.</p> <p>Plans for scaling agreed and resourced.</p> <p>Hot meals in schools Evaluation report published, making recommendations for next steps with the initiative.</p>	<p>Meals in ELC Budget submission made to secure funding for the 20/21 programme year.</p> <p>Hot meals in schools Pilot will commence from September 2019 (36 primary schools for 7,200). Budget of €2.5m provided for 2019/20.</p>	<p>Meals in ELC Establish Working Group.</p> <p>Roll out in a sample of ELC settings.</p> <p>Evaluation partners in place.</p> <p>Hot meals in schools Pilot continuing until end of school year (June 2020).</p> <p>Independent evaluation underway.</p>	<p>Meals in ELC Year 1 pilot complete.</p> <p>Evaluation complete.</p> <p>On the basis of findings, budget submission made for wider rollout.</p> <p>Hot meals in schools Recommendations from evaluation inform future decisions about initiative.</p>

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.2 Integrate health behaviour supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.4.2.4. Pilot the extension of the School Milk Scheme strand of the EU School Scheme to early childhood care and education settings, developing a bespoke model for the scheme taking the specific needs of children in such settings into account. Further to evaluation of the pilot and subject to available resources, consider the scaling up of this scheme to a larger number of settings.	Lead: DAFM Partners: DCYA, DES, DoH, National Dairy Council, Tusla, CCCs	Delivery of best in practice model to additional ELC service providers.	Establish Expert Working Group with stakeholder organisations. Selection of ELC Service Providers. Development of educational resources appropriate to ELC. Bespoke pilot model defined. Pilot programme costings and budget agreed.	Delivery of bespoke pilot programme to ELC service providers. Research study of pilot programme implementation undertaken. Publish report on pilot and outcomes. Decide if pilot model should be delivered to additional service providers with adaptations. Review of funding.	Examination of feasibility of model on a national scale. Programme costings and budget agreed.
	B.4.2.5. Develop and publish National Food Standards for ELC Settings, including a toolkit for implementation.	Lead: DoH Partners: HSE, DCYA, Tusla	Publish review of Nutrition Standards implementation.	Commence development of Nutrition Standards for ELCs (pending publication of Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1-5 Year Olds).	Publish Nutrition Standards for ELCs for 1-5 Year Olds, including a toolkit for implementation.	Monitor Nutrition Standards implementation.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.3 Promote child safety and prevent unintentional injuries to babies and young children.	B.4.3.1. a) Ensure full implementation of the updated Child Safety Programme, and b) building on this Programme, ensure child safety messages are integrated into all ELC (and school-age childcare) settings and the wider community.	Lead: HSE Partners: DoH, DCYA, Tusla	All parents and carers have up-to-date information and resources on child safety. Reduction in the risk of unintentional injury in children.	a) HSE Child Safety Programme updated. New resources available to parents and professionals. b) The HSE will work with DCYA and Tusla to develop the key messages to promote child safety in all ELC/SAC settings.	a) Best practice changes implemented. Emerging child safety risks identified and evidence-based information provided to parents and professionals. b) The HSE will work with DCYA and Tusla to develop the key messages to promote child safety in all ELC settings.	a) Best practice changes implemented. Emerging child safety risks identified, and evidence-based information provided to parents and professionals. b) The HSE will work with DCYA and Tusla to develop the key messages to promote child safety in all ELC settings.
	B.4.3.2. Develop and implement a comprehensive child injury prevention plan.	Lead: DoH	A child injury prevention plan.		Scoping and project initiation.	Plan finalised.
	B.4.3.3. In the context of the Road Safety Strategy 2013–2020 and, building on the development of the Cycle Right training standard, pilot the trainer bike programme to introduce cycling skills to pre-school and junior/senior infant age groups.	Lead: Cycling Ireland	Trainer bike programme piloted and evaluated.	Pilot of trainer bike programme underway.	Evaluation and consideration of the future of the programme.	Dependent on 2020 developments.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 4

Parents, families and communities will be supported to engage in and promote positive health behaviours among babies and young children, starting from the pre-conception period.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.1 Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.	B.5.1.1. Review the content and scope of Maternity and Infant Care Scheme, standardise the six-week post-natal check-up for the mother and the six-week check of the baby (as part of the Newborn Clinical Examination) and consider extending coverage of this Scheme to include a pre-conception consultation and beyond six-week post-natal check-up of the mother.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Implementation of the findings of the review commenced in line with available resources. GPs undertaking the six-week baby check as per the Newborn Clinical Examination. Greater standardisation and extension of Maternity and Infant Care Scheme, subject to negotiation and funding.	Terms of Reference developed and Review Group established. Project team in place and scoping of implementation plan commenced for the six-week baby check. Implementation plan agreed.	Review completed. Recommendations made, including financial implications for Budget 2021. Implementation plan commenced for the standardisation of the GP six-week baby check.	Implementation of review recommendations commenced in line with available resources. GPs undertaking the six-week check of the baby as per national agreed standard.
	B.5.1.2. As resources allow, make the antenatal visit by the Public Health Nurse more widely available to expectant mothers in line with need.	Lead: HSE	Plan in place to make antenatal PHN visits more widely available.		Background papers prepared. Options appraisal commenced.	Work plan agreed based on preferred option.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.1 Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.	B.5.1.3. Increase the use of antenatal care in the first trimester, particularly among vulnerable groups.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Plan to improve use of antenatal care by vulnerable women developed and being implemented.		Review of antenatal care by vulnerable women commenced. Plan for improved use of antenatal care by vulnerable women developed.	Implementation of plan commenced, subject to resources.
	B.5.1.4. Increase uptake of vaccinations during pregnancy by promoting the influenza vaccine during pregnancy, raising awareness of the importance of the pertussis vaccine during pregnancy and exploring mechanisms to effect administration of the vaccine.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	Improved uptake of influenza and pertussis vaccines in pregnancy.	HSE: Influenza vaccine – pilot of targeted emails to pregnant women over flu vaccine season. HSE: Develop materials for midwives and GPs to promote vaccines for pregnant women.	HSE: Investigate ways to improve recording of uptake of vaccines for pregnant women e.g. part of national maternity computer system subject to resources. DOH: Explore sustainable funding and administration models for the provision of vaccines in pregnancy.	HSE: Influenza vaccine – uptake of vaccine recorded so improvements can be documented.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>5.1</p> <p>Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.</p>	<p>B.5.1.5.</p> <p>Enhance the schedule of immunisations provided under the Primary Childhood Immunisation (PCI) Programme in accordance with international best practice and recommendations from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee and continue progress towards the national target of 95% uptake in the PCIP, achieving greater consistency in uptake across the country.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DoH and HSE</p>	<p>Uptake of PCI increasing in all areas of the country and approaching target of 95% for all vaccines.</p>	<p>HSE: Pilot targeted emails to parents of all babies just before due all appointments in PCI.</p> <p>HSE: Increased social media activity around PCI.</p> <p>HSE: Introductory e-learning for immunisation nurses developed to improve confidence in promoting vaccines.</p> <p>DoH: Review international evidence, with a view towards identifying the most appropriate interventions which might be applied in Ireland to maintain and increase uptake.</p>	<p>HSE: Improve training and information available to GPs and practice nurses to promote PCI with parents.</p> <p>DoH: Launch and build a national vaccine alliance which will improve vaccine confidence among healthcare professionals and parents.</p>	<p>HSE: If National Immunisation Information System (NIIS) is implemented, this should improve accuracy and timeliness of uptake information which can be provided back to GPs to target non-attenders. It is hoped this will include the ability to contact parents about immunisations, subject to resources.</p>

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.1 Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.	B.5.1.6. Measure the uptake of the free GP visit card to under 6s including a review of uptake of the Periodic Assessments at two and five and implement actions to increase uptake if required.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	New information and analytic systems to respond to GP returns including under 6s in place and reporting available so that trends in child health surveillance uptake and results can be tracked and analysed to inform policies and programmes.	Confirm HSE Senior Leadership Team lead for overall governance of GP return. Scope and design information and analytic systems to respond to GP returns including under 6s. Scoping and design of data analysis and display solution, in line with available resources.	Information and analytic systems to respond to GP returns including under 6s in place and reporting available.	Information and analytic systems to respond to GP returns including under 6s in place and reporting available.
	B.5.1.7. Continue progress to ensure the timing and content of the screening and surveillance programme are consistent with the evidence base and standardised across the country.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	Lead: Childhood screening and surveillance programme is more consistent and standardised nationally.	Evidence base for child health screening and surveillance reviewed and programme updated.	Blended learning training programme available to all child health service providers. Comprehensive child health information available to all parents and carers.	Continue progress to ensure the timing and content of the childhood screening and surveillance programme are consistent with the evidence base and standardised across the country.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.1 Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.	B.5.1.8. Ensure the full implementation nationally of the revised model of screening for congenital dysplasia of the hip.	Lead: DoH Partner: HSE	The revised model of screening for Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH) is provided to all babies.	Develop an action plan for the implementation of the revised model for screening for DDH, funding dependent. Targeted ultrasound programme for high-risk infants in place. Guidance in non-surgical treatment for DDH developed.	Develop ongoing governance for the revised model for screening programme for DDH as part of the overall Newborn Clinical Examination, funding dependent.	The revised model of screening for DDH is provided to all babies.
	B.5.1.9. Introduce a universal dental health package for children under six, supported by a screening/surveillance programme to target key ages and vulnerable groups.	Lead: DoH	Preventive packages available for children under six.	Launch of Smile agus Sláinte – National Oral Health Policy. Costed proposal developed for estimates process on the introduction of preventive oral healthcare packages for children under six. Discussions initiated with key partner agencies including potential contractors on the introduction of preventive oral healthcare packages for children under six.	Contract arrangements finalised and preventive oral healthcare packages introduced for children under six. Development of oral health evaluation programme for five-year-olds commenced.	Implementation of preventive packages for children under six. Oral health evaluation programme put in place.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.1 Resource and support the implementation, expansion and enhancement of the National Healthy Childhood Programme to ensure it better addresses the needs of babies, young children and families, enabled by the development of a dedicated child health workforce.	B.5.1.10. Ensure the mainstreaming and ongoing evaluation of the quality improvement initiatives commenced under the Nurture Programme – Infant Health and Wellbeing.	Lead: HSE	Updated, easily accessible information sources available for parents and carers. Blended learning training programme available to all child health service providers. Sustainability plan in place for delivery and development of child health services.	Up-to-date information sources available to all parents. Blended learning training and standardised resources in place for all child health service providers. Background papers on sustainability developed.	Nurture Evaluation Report published. Sustainability plan developed. Submissions made through the estimates process for funding to support sustainability.	Mainstreaming of a range of outputs from Nurture commenced, subject to resources. Governance structure with mandate for child health service delivery and development in place, subject to resources.
	B.5.1.11. Review the school health service/ programme and revise it in line with best evidence and practice.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Review of current school health service completed. Quality improvement plan developed and funding secured to implement.	Background documents prepared. Working group established. Review of current school health service commenced.	Review completed. Quality improvement project plan developed. Submissions made for additional funding.	

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.2 Make therapeutic and medical provision available to babies and young children on a consistent, equitable and timely basis.	B.5.2.1. Commence the implementation of Model of Care for Paediatric Healthcare Services with initial focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion in consultant paediatrician numbers, with a definite focus on general paediatrics, emergency paediatrics and community child health. Expanded roles for advanced nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and health and social care professionals. Developing the regional acute paediatric units to provide an appropriate range of regional services. 	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	Significant progress made on establishing a functioning national network in which local, regional, tertiary and quaternary hospitals work together on referrals and outreach services to ensure that all children access high-quality services in an appropriate location, within an appropriate timeframe, irrespective of their geographical location or social background.	Finalisation of HSE implementation plan and associated governance arrangements for the Paediatric Model of Care. Commencement of the implementation of the Paediatric Model of Care through recruitment of additional medical, nursing and health and social care professionals (HSCP) paediatric staff in Cork University Hospital, University Hospital Galway and University Hospital Limerick (UHL), in line with the Paediatric Model of Care.	Continue the development of acute paediatric units in Cork University Hospital (CUH), University Hospital Galway (UHG) and University Hospital Limerick (UHL). Continue prioritised implementation of the Paediatric Model of Care.	Continue the development of acute paediatric units in CUH, UHG and UHL. Continue prioritised implementation of the Paediatric Model of Care.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.2 Make therapeutic and medical provision available to babies and young children on a consistent, equitable and timely basis.	B.5.2.2. Continue to support the reconfiguration of services for children with disabilities in line with the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People programme.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	All children's disability services reconfigured and working in a more unified and efficient way.	Completion of recruitment process for remaining managers for Disability Network Teams. Appointment of the above. Reconfiguration of remaining Teams.	Dependent on 2019 developments.	Dependent on 2020 developments.
	B.5.2.3. Reduce children's waiting lists for primary care and early intervention, including waiting times.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	The reconfiguration of services will positively impact on waiting times and ensure quicker and more equitable access.	Phased introduction of 100 new therapy posts.	Dependent on 2019 developments.	Dependent on 2020 developments.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>5.2</p> <p>Make therapeutic and medical provision available to babies and young children on a consistent, equitable and timely basis.</p>	<p>B.5.2.4.</p> <p>Continue to develop access to supports for children with a disability/developmental delays through child-serving settings (e.g. AIM, In-Pre-School and School Therapy Demonstration Project, provision of nursing supports in ELC settings and schools for children with complex needs).</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: Members of the Cross Sectoral Implementation Group for AIM</p>	<p>Target of having an Inclusion Coordinator (INCO) in 80% of ELC settings achieved.</p> <p>Increase in proportion of ELC providers taking part in AIM.</p> <p>ELC practitioners better placed to respond to needs of children with a disability/ developmental delays.</p> <p>Pre-school children with complex medical needs accommodated within mainstream ELC settings to the greatest extent possible.</p>	<p>Continued implementation of AIM including:</p> <p>Oversee third year of LINC higher education programme. Plan for future provision of training and support for INCOs (beyond fourth year of LINC).</p> <p>Develop and commence rollout of Communications Strategy for AIM.</p> <p>Develop AIM training supports including rollout of online Sensory Processing training.</p> <p>Develop support model for pre-school children with complex medical needs and commence implementation.</p> <p>(Detail on Therapy Demonstration Project included separately. See action C.8.3.3.)</p>	<p>Continued implementation of AIM including:</p> <p>Oversee fourth year of LINC higher education programme. Begin rollout of next phase of training and support for INCOs.</p> <p>Continue rollout of Communications Strategy for AIM.</p> <p>Extension of AIM training supports for ELC practitioners.</p> <p>Continue implementation of support model for pre-school children with complex medical needs.</p>	<p>Continued implementation of AIM including:</p> <p>Continue rollout of next phase of training and support for INCOs.</p> <p>Review Communications Strategy for AIM (taking into account results of end-of-year-three evaluation of AIM).</p> <p>Extension of AIM training supports for ELC practitioners.</p> <p>Review implementation of support model and consider if enhancements needed (taking into account results of end-of-year-three evaluation of AIM).</p>

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 5

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, evidence-based integrated primary, preventative and specialist healthcare services.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.2 Make therapeutic and medical provision available to babies and young children on a consistent, equitable and timely basis.	B.5.2.5. Improve the Assessment of Need (AON) process in order to ensure timely access to appropriate services.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	A more streamlined and uniform way of conducting AON will lead to less pressure on resources and ensure compliance with legislation.	Agreement and implementation of new Standard Operating procedure for AON.		
	B.5.2.6. Progress the establishment of the new children's hospital to provide specialist tertiary and quaternary services for children from all over Ireland.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	The Connolly and Tallaght Outpatient and Urgent Care Centres will be fully open, improving geographic access to urgent care for children in the Greater Dublin Area, providing consultant-led urgent care, with 4–6 hour observation beds, appropriate diagnostics and secondary outpatient services including rapid access general paediatric clinics as well as child sexual abuse unit examination, observation and therapy rooms. The major programme of work of clinical integration, people and change management and commissioning required to achieve a successful transition to the new hospital facilities well underway.	Recruitment of the relevant staff for the new Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centre at Connolly. Open the Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centre at Connolly in 2019. Commencement of the expansion of the consultant-delivered work force for the new children's hospital with recruitment of service priority consultant posts.	Recruitment of the relevant staff for the new Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centre at Tallaght. Open the new Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centre at Tallaght in 2020.	Expansion of a consultant-delivered workforce across the existing hospital sites and increased capacity. Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centres at Tallaght and Connolly fully operational.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.1 Improve the early identification of mental health problems among babies, young children and families.	B.6.1.1. Provide information and guidance on promoting and supporting positive mental health among pregnant women, babies, young children and families and carry out a public information campaign to raise awareness of the importance of promoting social-emotional development, positive mental health and reducing the impact of early childhood trauma in babies and young children.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Infant mental health promoted and supported through better information sources. See also actions B.6.1.6 and B.6.2.6.	Public information campaign developed. Standardised information for healthcare professionals developed.	Ongoing review and development of infant mental health messages.	Ongoing review and development of infant mental health messages.
	B.6.1.2. Enhance efforts to promote positive mental health among pregnant women, babies, young children and their families in all resources and service contacts by extending the Making Every Contact Count: A Health Behaviour Change Framework and Implementation Plan for Health Professionals in the Irish Health Service to include mental health.	Lead: HSE	Scoping document to outline the expansion of Making Every Contact Count (MECC) to include the promotion of mental health and wellbeing as part of the revised implementation plan for the programme from 2021.	Continue to implement the MECC implementation plan for 2017-2020	Continue to implement the MECC implementation plan for 2017-2020.	Scoping complete to extend the MECC programme in relation to mental health and wellbeing promotion and included in revised implementation plan for the programme from 2021.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.1 Improve the early identification of mental health problems among babies, young children and families.	B.6.1.3. Improve diagnosis and services for women with pregnancy-related mental health problems.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Implementation of the HSE's National Model of Care (MOC) for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services (SPMHS) will improve diagnosis for women with pregnancy-related mental health (MH) problems. Specific training for midwives and primary care staff in identifying and being aware of referral pathways for SPMHS, subject to DoH/HSE agreement of Service Plan for each year. See also action B.6.2.1.	Implementation of the HSE's National MOC for SPMHS will improve diagnosis for women with pregnancy-related MH problems. Specific training for midwives and primary care staff in identifying and being aware of referral pathways for SPMHS.	Implementation of the HSE's National MOC for SPMHS will improve diagnosis for woman with pregnancy-related MH problems. Specific training for midwives and primary care staff in identifying and being aware of referral pathways for SPMHS.	Implementation of the HSE's National MOC for SPMHS will improve diagnosis for woman with pregnancy-related MH problems. Specific training for midwives and primary care staff in identifying and being aware of referral pathways for SPMHS.
	B.6.1.4. Extend post-natal depression screening by PHNs for all mothers, using a standardised evidence-based approach.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Scoping completed and recommended screening tool agreed, subject to DoH/HSE agreement on Service Plans.	Establish project team. Prepare discussion documents. Establish current baselines.	Review current practice completed. Evidence review completed. Screening tool recommended.	

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.1 Improve the early identification of mental health problems among babies, young children and families.	B.6.1.5. Roll out the standardised screening tool for social-emotional development – Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) – to all young children at the two-year developmental check.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	ASQ-3 rollout to all children at the two-year developmental check progressed.	Implementation plan for introduction of ASQ-3 developmental screening to 21–24-month child health contact developed. Training programme developed and delivered.	ASQ-3 developmental screening tool in use at the 21–24-month child health contact. Evaluation plan agreed.	Evaluation of implementation of ASQ-3 completed. Background work commenced on implementation of ASQ social and emotional screening tool, subject to DoH/HSE agreement on Service Plan.
	B.6.1.6. Support access to continuous professional development in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health to those who work with babies, young children and their families in line with the development of the Children's Workforce Initiative (see action D.3.B.5).	Lead: HSE	Infant mental health promoted and supported through up-to-date training programmes. See also actions B.6.1.1 and B.6.2.6.	Infant mental health blended learning training programme developed.	Child health service providers undertaking infant mental health training.	Child health service providers undertaking infant mental health training.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.2 Improve access to mental health supports and services for babies, young children and families, with a particular focus on initiatives that integrate mental health supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.6.2.1. Implement the National Model of Care (MOC) for Specialist Perinatal mental health with continued resourcing.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	All women during perinatal period will have easy access to a comprehensive perinatal mental health service based in each maternity service.	Complete recruitment of six hub teams. Collection of activity data in place. Joint planning of the recommended National Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) with CHO6 MHS, St Vincents University Hospital and HSE Estates commenced.	Further development of integrated hub and spoke service in line with National MOC. Enhance connectivity with Adult CMHTs and PHNs to improve the integrated pathway for women. Planning application for MBU submitted, subject to DoH/HSE agreement on Service Plan.	Building of MBU to begin, subject to DoH/HSE agreement on Service Plan. Continued development and evaluation of hub and spoke specialist perinatal MHS. Produce Evaluation Report of overall perinatal service in hub and spoke sites.
	B.6.2.2. Ensure priority is given to the needs of babies, young children and their families in the Refreshed Vision for Change and the forthcoming national mental health promotion plan.	Lead: DoH	A refreshed mental health policy and national mental health promotion plan.	Develop and publish refreshed Vision for Change mental health policy.	Develop and publish a mental health promotion plan to incorporate actions to support enhanced mental wellbeing across the life course and population. Implement recommendations in Vision for Change.	Implement recommendations in the Vision for Change Implement the mental health promotion plan.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.2 Improve access to mental health supports and services for babies, young children and families, with a particular focus on initiatives that integrate mental health supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.6.2.3. Develop and cost proposals to extend National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to ELC.	Lead: DES Partners: NEPS, DCYA	NEPS support model available for ELC.	DCYA and DES to explore scope of potential model for NEPS in ELC. Identify agreed protocol for interim critical incident support.	DCYA to agree fully costed model with NEPS for implementation.	Implement as agreed.
	B.6.2.4. Improve the capacity of community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and implement the revised operational guidelines.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Progression of CAMHS related priorities as set out in Service Plans for 2019, 2020 and 2021.	Progress CAMHS-related priorities agreed under the HSE Service Plan 2019 e.g. enhanced Community CAMHS Team capacity; 7-Day Service; Out-of-Hours Service; Day Hospital Care; Eating Disorder care; Early Intervention supports. CAMHS Advocacy Model. Finalise HSE Revised Operational Guidelines for CAMHS.	Progress CAMHS related priorities agreed under the HSE Service Plan 2020	Progress CAMHS related priorities agreed under the HSE Service Plan 2021

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.2 Improve access to mental health supports and services for babies, young children and families, with a particular focus on initiatives that integrate mental health supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.6.2.5. Improve access to parental mental health services (including counselling and psychological services) that treat maternal depression, anxiety disorders and substance abuse and identify and address any gaps in mental health services for very young children.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Evaluation of pilot services completed.	Pilot HSE Mental Health tele-psychiatry and tele-counselling services.	Evaluation of tele-psychiatry and tele-counselling services.	Dependent on evaluation of tele-psychiatry and tele-counselling services.
	B.6.2.6. Ensure that access to mental health supports for expectant and new mothers will be improved to ensure appropriate care can be provided in a timely fashion in line with the National Maternity Strategy.	Lead: DoH Partner: HSE	All women during perinatal period will have easy access to a comprehensive perinatal mental health service based in each maternity service. See also actions B.6.1.1 and B.6.1.6.	Mental Health (MH) midwives recruited and training provided for all 13 spoke hospitals and six hub sites. Mental Health midwives providing services in line with MOC and data collected in line with service provision.	Remaining five MH midwives to be recruited, subject to DoH/HSE agreement on Service Plan. Further training for primary care and maternity staff on referral pathways to SPMHS. Ongoing specific training for MH midwives and hub and spoke teams.	Further development of links with community services. Group work approach implemented where clinically indicated. Continue to provide education to all staff in maternity services on perinatal MH. Produce report of overall perinatal service in hub and spoke sites.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
6.2 Improve access to mental health supports and services for babies, young children and families, with a particular focus on initiatives that integrate mental health supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.	B.6.2.7. Provide additional support for parents of babies who receive a diagnosis of disability in the perinatal period and those who experience a traumatic birth or bereavement.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Additional support in place for parents who experience a traumatic birth or bereavement.	Funding provided to the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention to further develop bereavement counselling. Bereavement implementation process complete. Post bereavement implementation steering group in place.	Additional future funding will be dependent on allocation and the National Service Plan. Designated clinics to support women following traumatic births.	Additional future funding will be dependent on allocation and the National Service Plan.
	B.6.2.8. Continue to roll out and invest in the Clinical Programmes in eating disorders, self-harm and early intervention in psychosis (EIP). a) Eating Disorders National Clinical Programme. b) Assessment and management of self-harm presentation to emergency department following self-harm National Clinical Programme.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	(a) 16 specialist eating disorder teams in place spanning CAMHS and Adult services as per agreed Model of Care. Skilled workforce and evaluation process in place. (b) Full implementation of the national clinical programme (NCP) across emergency department (ED) network. A skilled workforce in place with published data on activity and service user/family experience of service.	(a) Three eating disorder specialist teams recruited and in clinical operation. (b) Clinical programme in operation in three Dublin paediatric hospitals.	(a) Six eating disorder specialist teams recruited and in clinical operation. (b) Ongoing recruitment of clinicians to achieve target of one Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) per 200 presentations of self-harm per ED.	(a) Remaining ten teams funded and recruitment underway. (b) Full implementation of NCP in each ED providing 24/7 care.

Outputs and milestones continued overleaf.

GOAL B

Optimum physical and mental health

OBJECTIVE 6

Babies, young children and their parents enjoy positive mental health.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>6.2</p> <p>Improve access to mental health supports and services for babies, young children and families, with a particular focus on initiatives that integrate mental health supports and services into child-serving settings and the wider community.</p>	<p>c) Early Intervention in Psychosis National Clinical Programme.</p> <p>d) ADHD in Adults National Clinical Programme.</p> <p>e) Dual Diagnosis.</p>		<p>(c) Agreed funding in place to extend the EIP service across the mental health service.</p> <p>(d) National availability of service for all adults (total funding of €6m required).</p> <p>(e) National availability of service for all adults with a moderate to severe Dual Diagnosis (total funding of €7.5m required).</p>	<p>(c) Model of Care published. Three EIP demonstration sites commenced.</p> <p>(d) Model of Care approved by College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and three demonstration sites established.</p> <p>(e) Model of Care completed by working group and approved by College of Psychiatrists of Ireland. Two demonstration sites established.</p>	<p>(c) Commence standalone team for EIP in urban area (funding required). Extensive training and education plan commenced.</p> <p>(d) Commence evaluation of three demonstration sites. Establish four further sites (funding €2m). Work with the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland to ensure training is provided for adult psychiatrists in the assessment and treatment of ADHD.</p> <p>(e) Commence evaluation of two demonstration sites. Establish three further sites. (funding €1.8m). Establish clear referral pathways with Primary Care Substance misuse services including alcohol.</p>	<p>(c) Publish evaluation report on three EIP demonstration sites.</p> <p>(d) Establish remaining services – seven sites and service for Dublin prisons (funding €4m).</p> <p>(e) Establish remaining services. Further enhance integrated ways of working. Establish remaining teams to complete national service.</p>

GOAL C POSITIVE PLAY-BASED EARLY LEARNING



GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 7

Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for children's early learning, starting from birth.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
7.1 Support parents and families to provide a stimulating home learning environment for babies and young children, with a particular focus on promoting play.	C.7.1.1. Carry out a national information campaign to build awareness of the important role that parents and families can play in supporting children's early learning with advice and information to empower parents and families in creating playful learning environments. Under this campaign, a bedtime reading campaign will be carried out. This will be supported by child-friendly events at local libraries to encourage an interest in learning from an early age, and to provide inspiration and access to age-appropriate reading material.	Lead: DCYA	Public information campaign conducted.	Schedule of campaigns agreed (see action A.2.1.2). Phase 1 background papers prepared. Phase 1 evidence reviews completed. Communications workshop held. Campaign objectives and scope agreed.	Communications advice secured. Project plan developed and commenced. Phase 2 background papers prepared. Phase 2 evidence reviews completed.	Information campaign strategy completed. Network of Department, Agency and NGO staff involved with supporting early learning established to share, disseminate and promote best practice. Public information campaign commenced.
	C.7.1.2. Provide parents and families with resources to support children's playful early learning commencing with a Baby Box and Book Bag Pilot Initiative through the First 5 Trials Programme.	Lead: DCYA Partners: To be determined on establishment of Oversight Group	Pilot complete and preliminary findings from evaluation available to inform next steps.	Establish Oversight Group. Identify partner to lead on pilot.	Pilot design agreed. Pre-pilot consultation completed. Scoping paper published. Evaluation partners in place.	Pilot underway. Concurrent evaluation of pilot underway. Undertake review to identify additional resources to support parents of young children.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 7

Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for children's early learning, starting from birth.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>7.1</p> <p>Support parents and families to provide a stimulating home learning environment for babies and young children, with a particular focus on promoting play.</p>	<p>C.7.1.3.</p> <p>Building on existing initiatives, including the Parent and Toddler Grant Initiative, develop further supports to family, including grandparents, friends and neighbours who provide informal care.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p>	<p>Enhanced Parent and Toddler Initiative and proposals for further supports for family who provide informal care.</p>	<p>Administer Parent and Toddler Grant in 2019.</p>	<p>Administer Parent and Toddler Grant in 2020.</p> <p>Review Parent and Toddler Grant and other potential supports that exists for family, friends and neighbours who provide informal care.</p> <p>Undertake key informant interviews.</p> <p>Make recommendations for existing initiative and new developments.</p>	<p>On the basis of the review, make changes to the Parent and Toddler Initiative and develop proposals for further supports.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 7

Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for children’s early learning, starting from birth.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
7.2 Facilitate and encourage greater parental involvement and engagement in early learning in ELC settings and primary schools.	C.7.2.1. Develop guidance and information for parents and families on ELC (and school-age childcare), including information on ELC (and school-age childcare) options and entitlements and guidance on key indicators of high-quality provision. Over time, explore the potential to develop a real-time finder of regulated ELC (and school-age childcare places) with links to inspection reports and other relevant information.	Lead: DCYA	Parents will have access to information on entitlements and guidance on indicators of high-quality provision.	Information on ELC (and school-age childcare) entitlements available on National Childcare Scheme website.	Produce guidance and information on key indicators of quality for parents and families and agree communications methods.	Scoping work undertaken on development of real-time place finder.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 7

Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for children's early learning, starting from birth.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
7.2 Facilitate and encourage greater parental involvement and engagement in early learning in ELC settings and primary schools.	C.7.2.2. Support greater parental involvement and engagement in children's early learning in ELC settings and primary schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop advice, guidance and training for ELC settings and primary schools to build effective working relationships with all parents, families and communities. Support ELC settings or primary schools to create opportunities to encourage and strengthen involvement of parents such as parent-practitioner meetings, parental advisory boards, home-ELC liaison officers, designated staff with responsibility for supporting parents, including initiatives in collaboration with the National Parents Council (Pre-Primary and Primary). 	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES Partners: To be identified	Guidance and training for ELCs and schools.	Linking with developments on transitions (see Objective 9), establish a working group to explore mechanisms for meaningful engagement with parents.	Scoping work undertaken to map existing good practice and establish potential mechanisms to support greater parental involvement, in line with milestones under actions C.9.1.1, C.9.1.2 and C.9.2.1. Partners in place.	Work with partners to design and deliver guidance and training, complementing existing initiatives

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 7

Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for children's early learning, starting from birth.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
7.3 Take steps to ensure positive enrolment and participation patterns in ELC settings and primary schools are established at the earliest opportunity.	C.7.3.1. Carry out a detailed assessment of the universal pre-school programme to identify groups of children with lower-than-average enrolment and participation rates and take steps to raise enrolment and participation among these groups.	Lead: DCYA	Evaluation of the universal pre-school programme.	Undertake analysis of Pupil Online Database to better understand uptake of the universal pre-school programme. Build detailed assessment into universal pre-school programme evaluation design.	Evaluation partner in place. Evaluation underway.	Evaluation complete. Consider evaluation findings and develop policy responses, with reference to developments on AIM and DEIS model for ELC.
	C.7.3.2. Extend the statutory powers of the Educational Welfare Service to all children under six years of age enrolled in a recognised school in line with legislative developments.	Lead: DCYA Partner: Tusla	Subject to legislative process.	Progress on the Education Welfare (Amendment) Bill is subject to the legislative priorities of the Houses of the Oireachtas.	Subject to legislative process.	Subject to legislative process.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.1 Make high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare) for babies and young children more affordable.	C.8.1.1. Provide continued funding and support for two full years of the universal pre-school programme. Undertake a review of the programme and, subject to findings, consider the need to make changes. Over the lifetime of the strategy, introduce a universal legal entitlement to pre-school.	Lead: DCYA Partner: Pobal	Primary legislation establishing a universal legal entitlement to pre-school. See also action C.7.3.1.	Initiate research and policy work to inform legal entitlement to pre-school.	Produce policy paper and Heads of Bill to establish a universal legal entitlement to pre-school.	Publish and support the passage of a Bill providing for a universal legal entitlement to pre-school.
	C.8.1.2. Introduce the National Childcare Scheme to publicly subsidise the cost of high-quality regulated ELC (and school-age childcare) to families and, over time, and as resources allow, progressively increase the number of families eligible for targeted subsidies and ensure subsidy rates are grounded in a robust funding formula that is based on the cost of delivering high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare). Undertake an end-of-year-three evaluation of National Childcare Scheme and, subject to evaluation findings, consider the need to make changes to the Scheme utilising and expanding the quality levers within the Scheme in order to drive continuous quality improvement.	Lead: DCYA Partners: Pobal, DEASP, Office of the Revenue Commissioners	Scheme introduced and one-year review completed.	Introduce the scheme, open to applications from parents and begin making subsidy payments under the scheme.	Initiate one-year review of scheme.	Complete one-year review of scheme.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.1 Make high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare) for babies and young children more affordable.	C.8.1.3. As part of the reform of the funding model, develop an appropriate mechanism to control fees charged to parents in return for increased State investment in affordability and quality.	Lead: DCYA Partner: To determine on establishment of Expert Group	Fee control mechanisms integrated into development of new funding model.	Working paper on possible mechanisms to control fees charged to parents initiated.	Legal advice secured on fee control mechanisms. Integrate outcomes of working paper and legal advice into development of funding model.	See milestones under New Funding Model (action D.5.B.3).
	C.8.1.4. Promote and support the registration of paid, non-relative childminders currently eligible to register with Tusla in preparation for the introduction of the National Childcare Scheme.	Lead: DCYA Partners: CCCs	Increase in the proportion of parents who use childminders who will have access to National Childcare Scheme subsidies.	Appoint a National Childminding Coordinator and a team of six regional Childminding Development Officers to work within City/ County Childcare Committees, to provide a range of supports for childminders to register with Tusla.	Through the National Childminding Coordinator and the team of regional Childminding Development Officers, continue to provide a range of supports for childminders to register with Tusla.	Through the National Childminding Coordinator and the team of regional Childminding Development Officers, continue to provide a range of supports for childminders to register with Tusla.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.2</p> <p>Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.</p>	<p>C.8.2.1.</p> <p>Extend regulation to all other paid, non-relative childminders (and to school-age childcare) on a phased basis. This will make National Childcare Scheme subsidies available to more parents who use childminding services.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: To be specified in the Childminding Action Plan</p>	<p>Publication and initial implementation of a ten-year Childminding Action Plan, involving a phased approach to bringing childminders into mainstream ELC and school-age childcare (SAC) provision, including through regulation.</p> <p>Introduction of initial regulations for school-age childcare and development of comprehensive regulations.</p>	<p>Publish and commence implementation of a ten-year Childminding Action Plan, setting out a phased approach to bringing childminders into mainstream ELC and SAC provision, including through regulation.</p> <p>Appoint a National Childminding Coordinator to lead the initial implementation of the Childminding Action Plan.</p> <p>Introduce initial regulations for school-age childcare, and carry out public consultation on comprehensive regulations.</p>	<p>Implement Phase 1 of the Childminding Action Plan.</p> <p>Building on consultation process and implementation of initial regulations, commence development of comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare.</p>	<p>Continuing implementation of Phase 1 of the Childminding Action Plan.</p> <p>Development of comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.2 Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.	C.8.2.2. Undertake research on the ELC (and school-age childcare) needs of parents who work atypical hours or live in rural communities and develop recommendations for future action.	Lead: DCYA	Report and recommendations made to support the needs of parents who work atypical hours or live in rural communities.		Research commissioned on the needs of parents who work atypical hours or live in rural communities.	Report complete. Recommendations for future action identified.
	C.8.2.3. Strengthen capacity to accurately forecast supply and demand for ELC (and school-age childcare) by undertaking a regular national need assessment.	Lead: DCYA Partners: DES, Pobal, CSO, ESRI	Increased capacity to plan for future ELC/SAC needs nationally.	Establish relationship with DES Forward Planning Unit to develop data capacity. Enhance data gathered through existing sources including Annual Sector Profile Survey and SWITCH modelling.	Develop approaches to forecasting supply and demand building on existing and new data sources including data generated through the National Childcare Scheme.	Having regard to existing and new data, make recommendations for future data needs.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.2</p> <p>Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.</p>	<p>C.8.2.4.</p> <p>Continue to administer a sustainability fund that ensures provision in the most deprived areas does not fail as a result of higher levels of need and/or temporary fluctuations in occupancy and consider longer-term mechanisms as part of the new funding model.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partner: Pobal</p>	<p>Funding and support mechanisms in place to support the sustainability of services delivering ELC and SAC programmes.</p>	<p>Working group on the sustainability implications of National Childcare Scheme.</p> <p>Deliver a number of Sustainability Funding strands including supports in preparation for the National Childcare Scheme and funding in response to CCS Overclaims issue.</p> <p>Finalise and deliver Sustainability Toolkit.</p> <p>Agree and finalise policy approach to Special services.</p> <p>Deliver North East Inner City (NEIC) response.</p>	<p>Deliver existing and new sustainability funding supports targeted at specific potential concerns, including the transition to the National Childcare Scheme.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of available sustainability supports and consider longer-term mechanisms as part of the new funding model.</p> <p>Continue to develop Pobal Case Management offering and capacity.</p>	<p>Review the effectiveness of available sustainability supports.</p> <p>Continue to develop Pobal Case Management offering and capacity.</p> <p>Further considerations of longer-term mechanisms as part of the new funding model.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.2 Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.	C.8.2.5. Update the National Planning Guidelines for the development of ELC (and school-age childcare) settings.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DHPLG	Updated National Planning Guidelines for the development of ELC (and school-age childcare) settings in place.	DCYA to complete initial review of existing guidelines and propose changes for discussions with DHPLG. Discussion completed and redrafted guidelines ready for wider consultation by year end.	Establish stakeholder group. Updated guidelines reviewed by stakeholder group. Updated guidelines finalised and published. Engage Local Authorities with new guidelines and explanatory notes.	Implement guidelines.
	C.8.2.6. Develop and publish a strategic capital investment plan to deliver the large-scale capital investment under Project 2040 with the aim of ensuring that the demand for high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare) places meets supply. This plan will include pilot projects under the First 5 Trials Programme that focus on innovative practice (e.g. outdoor ELC provision).	Lead: DCYA Partner: Pobal	Strategic approach to capital investment for ELC/SAC agreed in advance of the scheduled allocation of funds in the following years.	Production of a first draft report to determine learning from previous large-scale capital schemes, examine available evidence on capacity and quality needs and assess the impact of forthcoming policy changes.	Development of strategic approach based on recommendations and evidence in report. Agree with DPER approach to Project 2040 capital funding.	Publish strategic capital investment plan.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.2</p> <p>Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.</p>	<p>C.8.2.7.</p> <p>Use of schools and existing community facilities that have suitable environments for high-quality child-centred school-age childcare should be maximised where demand exists and where it can be facilitated by the school patron/trustees. Consider how increased use of school buildings could be facilitated, taking into account the issues raised to date, and continue to engage with property owners and school authorities to facilitate increased use of school buildings where feasible.</p>	<p>Lead: DES</p>	<p>Guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours updated.</p>	<p>Conduct a survey of a representative sample of schools on the use of school buildings to facilitate after-school care/ clubs, the results of which will be used to inform a review of the Guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours.</p>	<p>Update Guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours as informed by the results of the 2019 survey.</p>	

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.2</p> <p>Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.</p>	<p>C.8.2.8.</p> <p>Introduce measures to ensure that children in Gaeltacht areas have access to Irish-medium ELC provision.</p>	<p>Lead: DCHG</p> <p>Partners: Údarás na Gaeltachta, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (NUIG), Muintearas Teo</p>	<p>20 additional services accepted by Comhar Naíonra na Gaeltachta (CNNG).</p> <p>430 additional children receiving services through Irish (an increase of 29%).</p> <p>Support/advice provided to 40 services (600 children attending) operating through English regarding use of Irish.</p> <p>Awareness raised with 3,000 parents regarding services available through Irish.</p> <p>Certified training provided to 60 employees.</p>	<p>Allocation of €355,000 provided in 2018/2019 by the Department to CNNG for the provision of additional services in the Gaeltacht under the Language Planning Process.</p> <p>Recruitment of two additional Development Officers.</p> <p>Accept eight additional services under the auspices of CNNG.</p> <p>Provide support/ advice to 15 services operating through English regarding using Irish in their services.</p> <p>Communicate and raise awareness with 2,500 parents regarding the services that are available through Irish.</p>	<p>Allocation of €435,000 provided in 2019/2020 to CNNG for the provision of additional services in the Gaeltacht under the Language Planning Process.</p> <p>Recruitment of two additional officers.</p> <p>Accept six additional services under the auspices of CNNG.</p> <p>Provide support/ advice to 15 additional services (30 in total) operating through English regarding using Irish in their services.</p> <p>Communicate and raise awareness with 2,600 parents regarding the services that are available through Irish.</p>	<p>Allocation of €470,000 provided in 2020/2021 to CNNG for the provision of additional services in the Gaeltacht under the Language Planning Process.</p> <p>Accept six additional services under the auspices of CNNG.</p> <p>Provide support/ advice to ten additional services (40 in total) operating through English regarding using Irish in their services.</p> <p>Communicate and raise awareness with 3,000 parents regarding the services that are available through Irish.</p>

Outputs and milestones continued overleaf.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.2 Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC (and school-age childcare) to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.				<p>Develop a connection between 20 pre-school services and 40 primary schools while also highlighting best practice.</p> <p>Provide support for employees in the ELC sector in the Gaeltacht in relation to training and professional development to ensure capacity building and skills development requirements are met. Skills and capacity training: target 20 employees.</p> <p>Explore the possibilities regarding the provision of ELC courses at FETAC Level 5 to 8 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) through the medium of Irish.</p>	<p>Develop a connection between 80 pre-school services and 110 primary schools while also highlighting best practice.</p> <p>Skills and capacity training: target 20 employees.</p>	<p>Develop a connection between 90 pre-school services and 120 primary schools while also highlighting best practice.</p> <p>Skills and capacity training: target 20 employees.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.3</p> <p>Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity through the integration of additional supports and services for children and families with additional needs.</p>	<p>C.8.3.1.</p> <p>Ensure that future capital investment facilitates the participation of all children in ELC and promotes settings that are inclusive and accessible to all children, families and practitioners, informed by Universal Design Guidelines.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: DHPLG, National Disability Authority, Early Childhood Ireland, TrinityHaus</p>	<p>Universal Design Guidelines disseminated.</p> <p>Greater awareness of the Universal Design Guidelines and encouragement of use in applying for capital funding.</p>	<p>Launch the Universal Design Guidelines for ELC Settings.</p> <p>Promote the Universal Design Guidelines to ELC and Building Sector.</p> <p>Share publication with Local Authority Planning Departments.</p>	<p>Introduce mechanisms to ensure the Universal Design Guidelines are used by settings when applying for capital funding.</p> <p>Examine scope for a specific funding strand to support best practice in Universal Design in ELC within capital funding programmes.</p>	<p>Introduce mechanisms to ensure Universal Design Guidelines are used by settings when applying for capital funding.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>8.3</p> <p>Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity through the integration of additional supports and services for children and families with additional needs.</p>	<p>C.8.3.2.</p> <p>Continue to roll out AIM to ensure the full inclusion of children with a disability in settings delivering the universal pre-school programme. Undertake an end-of-year-three evaluation of AIM and, subject to evaluation findings and other relevant developments, consider enhancements to, and/or extension of, AIM to, for example, all ELC services, all school-age childcare services and/or to children with additional needs other than a disability. As part of this evaluation, consideration will be given to other supports that exist for children with a disability in ELC and the scope to consolidate and streamline these under AIM, or to align eligibility and access routes as well as practice and training.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: DoH, DES, HSE, and other partners to be determined following the AIM Evaluation</p>	<p>Year-three evaluation of AIM completed, and next steps regarding enhancements and/or extension of AIM agreed.</p>	<p>Commission end-of-year-three evaluation of AIM.</p> <p>Agree approach with DoH/HSE/DES to alignment of eligibility rules and access routes for mainstream and specialist pre-schools and examine potential provision of training supports to specialist services.</p> <p>Agreement reached with DoH/HSE in relation to the future of HSE-funded supports in mainstream pre-schools.</p>	<p>End-of-year-three evaluation of AIM completed.</p> <p>Implementation and monitoring of agreed eligibility rules on mainstream and specialist pre-schools.</p> <p>Implementation of agreement on HSE-funded supports in mainstream pre-schools, dependent on the results of the year-three evaluation of AIM.</p>	<p>Depending on results of the year-three evaluation of AIM, consider enhancements to, and/or extension of, AIM to, for example, all ELC settings (including children aged 0–3), all school-age childcare services and/or to children with additional needs other than a disability.</p> <p>Review eligibility rules and consider future of HSE specialist pre-schools in context of results of the year-three evaluation of AIM and developments in education sector e.g. NCSE policy advice regarding special schools and special classes.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.3 Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity through the integration of additional supports and services for children and families with additional needs.	C.8.3.3. Oversee and evaluate the In-School and ELC Therapy Support Demonstration Project, and, subject to the findings of the evaluation and any other relevant developments, consider the model for national rollout (as resources allow).	Joint Leads: DES and DCYA Partners: DoH, NCSE, HSE, and other partners to be determined	In-School and ELC Therapy Demonstration Project completed and evaluated.	Complete one year of operational work by therapists in the Demonstration Project. Evaluation report finalised. Examine scope for project extension to a second year, depending on evaluation findings, in the context of the DES pilot of reform of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme.	Complete second year of the In-School and ELC Therapy Demonstration Project. Evaluate and report on year-two learning and in the context of the SNA reform pilot and the development of a wider School Inclusion Model.	Potential further rollout to other areas and regions, depending on evaluation findings.
	C.8.3.4. Introduce mechanisms through the National Childcare Scheme (with periodic reviews, including a review of relevant Scheme data, and with periodic stakeholder consultation), to ensure that children with specific vulnerabilities – including children in homeless families and children in direct provision – have access to high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare).	Lead: DCYA Partners: Pobal, DES, DJE, HSE, Tusla, Local Authorities	Sponsorship arrangements in place and subject to six-monthly reviews. Capacity to further support vulnerable children and families kept under continual review.	Sponsorship arrangements in place (with six-monthly review) to support ELC and school-age childcare under the National Childcare Scheme for children and families with specific vulnerabilities.	Consider further National Childcare Scheme-related mechanisms to support children and families with specific vulnerabilities.	Consider further National Childcare Scheme-related mechanisms to support children and families with specific vulnerabilities.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 8

Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, integrated ELC (and school-age childcare), which reflects diversity of need.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
8.3 Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity through the integration of additional supports and services for children and families with additional needs.	C.8.3.5. Develop mechanisms to provide additional supports to ELC services where there are high proportions of children who are at risk of poverty to mitigate the impacts of early disadvantage. Specifically, informed by the DEIS model, develop a programme for the delivery of ELC in the context of concentrated disadvantage.	Lead: DCYA Partners: Pobal, DES and others to be determined on establishment of working group	Programme to mitigate early disadvantage agreed and piloted in identified services and subject to evaluation.	Working group to oversee development of initiative appointed. Methodology developed for assessing levels of concentrated disadvantage in ELC/SAC settings.	Working paper on key features of an ELC/SAC model that effectively responds to early childhood poverty/disadvantage developed. Agree identification and allocation model and associated costings. Test identification model with data available from the National Childcare Scheme. Identification of settings for pilot.	Pilot initiated and accompanying evaluation underway. See milestones under development of new funding model.
	C.8.3.6. Develop mechanisms to provide Irish-language supports to ELC provision where there are high proportions of children who are learning through medium of Irish.	Lead: DCYA Partners: Monitoring Group for the ELC Actions under the five-year Action Plan for the Irish Language	Enhanced and more coordinated suite of supports and resources available to the Irish Language ELC sector.	Appointment of two coordinator posts to lead on implementation of the actions in the five-year Irish Language Action Plan.	Build on the groundwork undertaken in 2019 to progress the actions in the Irish Language Plan.	Build on 2020 developments.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>9.1</p> <p>Introduce measures to exchange information, involve children and parents, and develop strong partnerships between ELC settings and primary schools to support transitions.</p>	<p>C.9.1.1. Provide information and guidance to parents, families, childminders and communities on the role they can play in supporting transitions (with tailored advice and information for vulnerable groups), including guidance for parents making decisions around school starting age.</p> <p>C.9.1.2. Roll out transition activities (including joint CPD) between ELC settings and primary schools, and introduce NCCA's reporting templates and associated support material. Building on that work, develop a national approach to support the transitions experienced by children as they move into and through ELC settings.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DCYA and DES</p> <p>Partners: NCCA and others to be determined on establishment of working group</p>	<p>New policy model in place to implement transitions actions in First 5.</p>	<p>Establish and agree terms of reference for IDG to develop policy model for transition actions in First 5 and parental engagement in ELC more widely (see action on parental involvement above).</p>	<p>Finalise and publish model.</p> <p>Set out implementation strands.</p>	<p>Implement strands of new model as agreed.</p>
<p>9.2</p> <p>Increase continuity in curriculum and pedagogy across ELC settings and the early years of primary school.</p>	<p>C.9.2.1. Provide clarification for ELC settings and primary schools on the appropriate dispositions, skills and knowledge for children as they make the transition into primary school.</p>					

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>9.2</p> <p>Increase continuity in curriculum and pedagogy across ELC settings and the early years of primary school.</p>	<p>C.9.2.2.</p> <p>Align the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum for the early years of primary school with Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, to facilitate progression in children's early learning as they move from ELC settings to primary school.</p>	<p>Lead: DES</p>	<p>A Primary Curriculum Framework in place informing all curriculum developments at primary and supporting greater alignment and continuity between ELC and the early years of primary school.</p>	<p>Research report and webinar on curriculum alignment published.</p> <p>Schools' Forum involving ELC and primary schools helping to shape a redeveloped primary curriculum.</p> <p>Internal Working Group on curriculum alignment established.</p> <p>Draft Primary Curriculum Framework developed drawing on research, Forum deliberations and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>Draft framework published for consultation.</p> <p>Primary Language Curriculum/ Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile informed by the principles and pedagogies of Aistear published.</p>	<p>Consultation on a draft Primary Curriculum Framework completed.</p> <p>Finalised Primary Curriculum Framework published and informing the development of specifications in curriculum areas/ subjects.</p> <p>Draft Primary Mathematics Curriculum informed by the principles and pedagogies of Aistear, published for consultation.</p>	<p>Specifications for curriculum areas and subjects in development and informed by the Primary Curriculum Framework.</p> <p>Primary Mathematics Curriculum informed by the principles and pedagogies of Aistear, published.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
9.2 Increase continuity in curriculum and pedagogy across ELC settings and the early years of primary school.	C.9.2.3. Develop consistency and continuity in the evaluation of curriculum and pedagogy between ELC settings and the early years of primary school, with due consideration for the structural differences in the two contexts. Specifically, revise arrangements for the inspection of the early years of primary school as redevelopment of the Primary School Curriculum enhances the relationship with Aistear.	Lead: DES	Review of relevant inspection processes completed. Development of new or revised inspection processes to support continuity in curriculum and pedagogy between ELC and Early Primary provision in parallel with the introduction of curricular developments/change.	Project plan for the review of inspection processes, including plans for consultation with relevant education partners. Draft proposals for “transitions” model of inspection for use in consultation.	Complete consultations on “transitions” model of inspection. Initiate trial of “transitions” model of inspection. Review of existing models of inspection completed against draft primary curriculum. Draft revised models of inspection for trial in line with implementation of curriculum changes.	Complete trial of “transitions” model of inspection and finalise for use. Trial of adjusted/ revised inspection models as curriculum changes are implemented.
	C.9.2.4. Having regard to resource implications, explore over time appropriate class sizes in the early years of primary school as a redeveloped Primary School Curriculum is aligned with Aistear.	Lead: DES	Keep under review.	Keep under review.	Keep under review.	Keep under review.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>9.3</p> <p>Ensure the necessary supports are in place to sustain learning for all children as they transition from ELC settings to primary school.</p>	<p>C.9.3.1.</p> <p>Provide continued funding and support to implement and enhance DEIS.</p>	<p>Lead: DES</p>	<p>All relevant actions to support transitions from ELC settings to DEIS primary schools in place and running effectively with monitoring and evaluation showing a smooth transition process in place.</p> <p>DEIS Plan 2017 Actions implemented.</p>	<p>Develop guidelines for DEIS schools to support successful transitions at all stages of the education spectrum to facilitate an integrated model of access.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework.</p> <p>Launch Schools Excellence Fund Tranche 3.</p> <p>Enhanced engagement between ELC settings and DEIS schools aided by Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Coordinators.</p> <p>HSCL Coordinator role to be restated to reference role in supporting transitions between ELC and the formal school environment.</p>	<p>Learning from monitoring and evaluation and School Excellence Fund DEIS on successful initiatives to be disseminated to support better practice.</p> <p>Continued implementation of various actions contained in DEIS supporting transitions, parental and community involvement and school climate.</p>	<p>Continued implementation of various actions contained in DEIS with a focus on supporting transitions, parental and community involvement and school climate.</p>

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
9.3 Ensure the necessary supports are in place to sustain learning for all children as they transition from ELC settings to primary school.	C.9.3.2. Develop proposals to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review of the SNA Scheme.	Lead: DES	Consideration of proposals to extend School Inclusion Model to other areas or regions.	Proposals approved by Government. Trial of new School Inclusion Model commenced in 2019/20 school year.	Continued piloting of School Inclusion Model and accompanying evaluation. Evaluation of the pilot complete. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, return to Government with proposals for extending the new Model.	Dependent on 2020 developments.
	C.9.3.3. Ensure AIM and the In-School and ELC Therapy Support Demonstration Model bring a focus to positive transitions from ELC to primary school. This will require early and strong collaboration between ELC and primary school support services (e.g. Better Start Quality Development Services, National Council for Special Education).	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES Partners: National Council for Special Education (NCSE), National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), National Parents Council (NPC)	New policy model in place to implement transitions actions in First 5. See also actions C.9.1.1, C.9.1.2 and C.9.2.1.	AIM Transition Planning in collaboration with NCSE and NCCA (Mo Scéal). Information sessions for parents on transition to primary school by NPC with support from Better Start and NCSE. Establish and agree terms of reference for Interdepartmental Group (IDG) to develop policy model for transitions actions in First 5.	Finalise and publish model. Set out implementation strands.	Implement strands of new model as agreed.

GOAL C

Positive play-based early learning

OBJECTIVE 9

Children will be supported in their transitions to (and through) ELC settings and onwards to primary schooling.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>9.3</p> <p>Ensure the necessary supports are in place to sustain learning for all children as they transition from ELC settings to primary school.</p>	<p>C.9.3.4.</p> <p>Increased investment in children's education will be supported by the Programme for Government and Action Plan for Education commitment to raise capitation rates at primary and post-primary level as resources allow.</p>	<p>Lead: DES</p>	<p>Investment in education supported as part of annual estimates process.</p>	<p>Investment in education supported as part of annual estimates process.</p>	<p>Investment in education supported as part of annual estimates process.</p>	<p>Investment in education supported as part of annual estimates process.</p>

GOAL D AN EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM



GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>1.A</p> <p>Put in place effective implementation and governance structures and public engagement mechanisms for First 5.</p>	<p>D.1.A.1.</p> <p>As a constituent strategy of BOBF, the implementation of First 5 will be overseen by BOBF Implementation Structures to allow for a comprehensive and connected approach to addressing key issues which impact on the lives of babies, young children and their families. The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Services, chaired by An Taoiseach, will oversee the implementation of First 5. New nominations to BOBF Implementation Structures (i.e. Children and Young People's Policy Consortium, Sponsors Group, Advisory Council) will be sought to ensure the necessary focus on babies, young children and their families. These Implementation Structures involve widespread multilateral engagement from across Government Departments, State Agencies and others. The Implementation Structures are described in further detail in the section on Implementation and Oversight. A First 5 Implementation Team will be established in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to spearhead the coordination and monitoring of implementation of First 5, liaising with the BOBF Implementation Team.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: BOBF Implementation Structures and all key Government Departments and Agencies</p>	<p>Effective process of engagement and interaction agreed, established and in operation between First 5 Implementation Office and BOBF Implementation Structures.</p>	<p>First 5 Implementation Office established.</p> <p>New nominations to BOBF Advisory Council and Sponsors Group proposed.</p> <p>BOBF Advisory Council Terms of Reference and Work Plan agreed, including in respect of role in overseeing First 5 and promoting related thematic areas of focus.</p> <p>Paper on engagement with BOBF Implementation Structures agreed by DCYA management board and relevant structures to establish frequency and nature of engagement.</p> <p>BOBF Implementation Structures used to tackle implementation challenges that may arise.</p> <p>First 5 Implementation Team engaging effectively with BOBF Implementation Structures.</p>	<p>Continued effective engagement between First 5 Implementation Team and BOBF Implementation Structures.</p> <p>BOBF Advisory Council Work Plan agreed, including in respect of role in overseeing First 5 and promoting related thematic areas of focus.</p> <p>BOBF Advisory Council invited to publish a commentary on Year 1 of implementation.</p> <p>BOBF Implementation Structures used to tackle implementation challenges that may arise.</p>	<p>Continued effective engagement between First 5 Implementation Team and BOBF Implementation Structures.</p> <p>BOBF Advisory Council Work Plan agreed, including in respect of role in overseeing First 5 and promoting related thematic areas of focus.</p> <p>BOBF Advisory Council invited to publish a commentary on Year 2 of implementation.</p> <p>BOBF Implementation Structures used to tackle implementation challenges that may arise.</p> <p>BOBF Implementation Structures invited to contribute to review of First 5 and development of Phase 2 Implementation Plan (2022-2024).</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.A Put in place effective implementation and governance structures and public engagement mechanisms for First 5.	D.1.A.2. The First 5 Implementation Team will ensure that within six months of the date of publication of this Strategy, a detailed three-year implementation plan is developed with a timetable for delivery, including the assignment of responsibility for actions.	Lead: DCYA	Implementation Plan published and monitoring and reporting underway.	Implementation Plan agreed and published.		
	D.1.A.3. The First 5 Implementation Team will prepare an annual report on the implementation of the Strategy.	Lead: DCYA	Annual Reports prepared and published.		Annual Report 2019 prepared and published.	Annual Report 2020 prepared and published.
	D.1.A.4. The First 5 Implementation Team will carry out a three-year review of the Strategy with a view to developing a further implementation plan for the following three years.	Lead: DCYA	Three-year review published in anticipation of Phase 2 Implementation Plan.			IDG established. Terms of review agreed. Three-year review undertaken.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.A Put in place effective implementation and governance structures and public engagement mechanisms for First 5.	D.1.A.5. Support the meaningful participation of young children and parents of young children in the development of policy, programmes and practice that concern them, including seldom heard groups. This will involve the development and use of appropriate methodologies and mechanisms for consulting and engaging with young children and parents of young children, the development and delivery of child participation training programmes for those working with children and the publication of guidance on children's participation.	Lead: DCYA and Hub na nÓg Partners: Relevant early years sectoral partners	A framework for Children and Young People's Participation will be completed and published; implementation of the framework will be supported for babies and young children context with appropriate guidance and training with respect to methodologies and mechanisms relevant to under 6s. Parent panel in place.	Progress on development and piloting of a national framework for children and young people's participation with a view to publication by year end.	To support implementation of the national framework on children and young people's participation in the early years context, DCYA will support development of guidance on specific methodologies and mechanisms for working with under 6s. Scoping exercise on consulting with parents completed.	A training programme to support implementation of the national framework and its related methodologies will be developed and implemented. Parent consultation panel established.
	D.1.A.7. Implement a communications plan that will ensure the importance of early childhood development and learning is well understood and how actions and projects in First 5 can contribute to improving babies' and young children's experiences.	Lead: DCYA Partners: Government Departments and Agencies involved in First 5	Greater awareness, among stakeholders and the wider public, of First 5 and the importance of early childhood and early learning.	First 5 Communications Framework established. Communications plan developed and published.	Actions in communications plans implemented.	Actions in communications plans implemented.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.B Strengthen leadership and governance across the early childhood system at a national and local level.	D.1.B.1. Strengthen leadership and cross-sectoral action for parenting supports by establishing a dedicated Parenting Support Policy Unit in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	Lead: DCYA	Parenting Support Policy Unit established.	Unit established in November 2018. Unit head appointed January 2019.		
	D.1.B.2. Building on the development of the 2017 Whole-of- Government Approach to Tackling Child Poverty, monitor and track progress on the achievement of the child poverty target through BOBF Implementation Structures under the joint leadership of the Departments of Employment and Social Protection, and Children and Youth Affairs.	Joint Leads: DEASP and DCYA	Substantial progress in reducing child poverty and a multi-dimensional approach to tackling child poverty well developed.	Social Inclusion: a new integrated strategy 2019–2025 published.	Monitoring and reporting on Social Inclusion Strategy.	Monitoring and reporting on Social Inclusion Strategy.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.B Strengthen leadership and governance across the early childhood system at a national and local level.	D.1.B.3. Build on work of established working group led by the Department of Justice and Equality, with representatives from the Departments of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and Children and Youth Affairs to progress the development of proposals on family leave and family-friendly working.	Lead: DJE Partners: DEASP, DBEI, DCYA	Effective cross-Departmental mechanism in operation to support legislative and policy developments related to family leaves and family-friendly working.	DJE-chaired Working Group reconvened and reconstituted with membership from DBEI, DEASP, DCYA and other representatives as necessary. Terms of Reference agreed.	Annual programme of work agreed and implemented.	Annual programme of work agreed and implemented.
	D.1.B.4. Strengthen leadership and cross-sectoral action for child health through the new Healthy Ireland Office to be established in the Department of Health, and through expanding and enhancing the HSE National Healthy Childhood Programme as a policy priority programme.	Joint Leads: DoH and HSE	Enhanced Healthy Ireland Office established.	Progress Business Case for Healthy Ireland Office in line with Sláintecare Action Plan 2019.	Dependent on 2019 developments.	Dependent on 2020 developments.
	D.1.B.5. Identify and scope the issue of food poverty as a cross-sectoral priority under BOBF, and in alignment with overall Healthy Ireland implementation, led by the Department of Health.	Lead: DoH Partners: DCYA, BOBF Advisory Council	Implement work programme Year 3 and publish progress report.	Establish a Joint Working Group on Food Poverty. Scope and agree work programme.	Implement work programme Year 1.	Implement work programme Year 2.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.B Strengthen leadership and governance across the early childhood system at a national and local level.	D.1.B.6. Establish formal mechanisms to align and coordinate the policy, practice and implementation work of the Departments of Children and Youth Affairs, and Education and Skills, in respect of ELC, commencing with a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	Strong and productive collaborative engagement between the two Departments to support coherent policy making and decisions along the education/ELC continuum.	Implement MOU – hold high-level meetings as provided for in MOU to discuss and progress critical areas of cooperation and other arising issues.	Implement MOU – hold high-level meetings as provided for in MOU to discuss and progress critical areas of cooperation and other arising issues. Draft and agree new MOU for 2021 and 2022.	Implement MOU – hold high-level meetings as provided for in MOU to discuss and progress critical areas of cooperation and other arising issues.
	D.1.B.7. Strengthen existing relationships between the Departments of Children and Youth Affairs, and Education and Skills, through the establishment of a high-level Inter-Departmental Group to develop policy proposals and to commission research in relation to key cross-cutting issues affecting early learning of babies and young children (e.g. school starting age; transitions; impact of pre-school on primary school provision).	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	Strong and productive collaborative engagement between the two Departments to support coherent policy making and decisions along the education/ELC continuum.	Proposals to be developed and implemented as agreed through high-level engagement set out in MOU.	Proposals to be developed and implemented as agreed through high-level engagement set out in MOU.	Proposals to be developed and implemented as agreed through high-level engagement set out in MOU.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.B Strengthen leadership and governance across the early childhood system at a national and local level.	D.1.B.8. Support an increased role for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in ELC curriculum development through changes to the NCCA governance structures.	Joint Leads: DES and DCYA Partner: NCCA	Enhanced information flows from NCCA to DCYA and vice versa in relation to curriculum development.	Appointment of Minister of CYA nominee to new NCCA Council. Appointment of DCYA official to Early Childhood and Primary Board of the Council.	Full participation of nominees and official in governance structures.	Full participation of nominees and official in governance structures.
	D.1.B.9. Review the operating system for ELC (and school-age childcare), at national and local level, to develop more consolidated and streamlined planning, funding, administration and quality support. As part of this review, consider a range of possible options including a dedicated Statutory Agency, the use of existing State Agencies or the establishment of an executive arm of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	Lead: DCYA	Consideration of the review and moving towards implementation phase.	Initial planning and development of the structures to initiate the review. Approval of approach, establishment of oversight group and identification of external resources.	Continued work on the review through 2020 leading to recommendations.	Consideration of the review and moving towards implementation phase.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
1.C Progress collaborative initiatives and integrated service development and delivery to support babies, young children and their families.	D.1.C.1. Explore the potential for joined-up and integrated service development and delivery for babies, young children and their families, through ELC settings as a natural hub for collaborative work with families.	Lead: DCYA	Research report. Policy proposals.	Gather data on additional services offered in the context of ELC provision.	Gather data on existing provision e.g. AIM, Therapy Demonstration project, ABCs. Review international models of integrated ELC settings.	Develop policy proposals.
	D.1.C.2. Pilot the development of Family and Early Childhood Centres that bring together a range of services to support parents and children in the early stages of development.	Lead: DCYA	Research report. Policy proposals.		Gather data on existing provision e.g. FRC programme. Review of international models of Child and Family centres.	Develop policy proposals. Explore options in the context of NDP funding.
	D.1.C.3. Pilot the development of models of local collaboratives to better address governance and sustainability in ELC, in partnership with community and private ELC (and school-age childcare) providers.	Lead: DCYA	Preliminary findings from research on pilot available.	Paper on different models of ELC collaboratives initiated. Funding secured in estimates process to pilot in 2020.	Partner identified. Pilot designed and rolled out. Research partner identified and terms of pilot evaluation agreed.	Pilot ongoing. Research underway.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Committed leadership, strong governance and positive collaboration and engagement aligned around a shared vision for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.A</p> <p>Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.2.A.1.</p> <p>Develop and publish a set of quality standards for publicly funded parenting supports and services.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: Tusla, HSE and voluntary sector</p>	<p>Quality standards for publicly funded parenting supports and services agreed and published.</p>		<p>Background papers prepared.</p>	<p>Project plan developed and commenced.</p> <p>Working group established.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement commenced.</p> <p>Quality standards agreed by Departments and Agencies and published.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.A</p> <p>Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.2.A.2.</p> <p>Develop guidance and support for Family Resource Centres (FRCs) to enhance and consolidate the delivery of the FRC programme.</p>	<p>Lead: Tusla</p> <p>Partner: DCYA</p>	<p>National Commissioning Unit and PPFS structures fully integrated to ensure FRC capacity to consolidate and enhance programme in line with local area needs.</p>	<p>Strengthening of National Commissioning and PPFS relationship with National FRC representative body to encourage further development of early evidence-based parenting supports and early childhood preventive services in all FRCs.</p> <p>Provision of generic guidance and support in the area of policies and overall governance through voluntary support agencies to all FRC.</p> <p>National Commissioning Unit and Local PPFS will move to joint Service Agreement reviews to encourage FRC service delivery to align to local needs including early childhood supports and prevention services.</p> <p>Reviewing FRC programme oversight structures with PPFS management. Make proposals for enhanced oversight and supports to assist with service alignment to meet needs of early childhood.</p>	<p>Continue building and developing relationships with National FRC representative body.</p> <p>Put in place procured support function for FRC agencies to assist in governance and to encourage service development.</p> <p>Continue to develop local area PPFS involvement in support and oversight of FRCs to encourage further development of evidence-based support and prevention services.</p>	<p>Continue to build on the development of local PPFS Tusla oversight and support function.</p> <p>Review services of procured support Agency for efficacy.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
2.A Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.	D.2.A.3. Review current assessment and screening tools for babies, young children and families, particularly those with additional support needs, to facilitate collaborative working across health and social care professionals and effective referral pathways. Ensure that these are consistently implemented nationally.	Lead: DCYA Partners: all relevant Government Departments and State Agencies	Publication of review and recommendations. See also actions D.3.B.5 and D.4.B.8.		In the context of the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (action D.3.B.5), initiate a mapping exercise of assessment and screening tools used across different services for babies and young children.	Finalise mapping exercise including identification of recommendations for how tools might be used more across disciplines and sectors with greater co-ordination to facilitate collaborative working.
	D.2.A.4. Develop a standardised, accredited curriculum framework for antenatal education for parents.	Lead: HSE	National Standards for Antenatal Education available; Training Programme for Antenatal Educators developed and delivered; Self- Audit tool for Antenatal Education Providers available.	Antenatal Education Standards finalised. Local implementation of standards commenced via maternity and community services. Antenatal Educators Programme developed and initial rollout commenced.	Finalise mapping exercise including identification of recommendations for how tools might be used more across disciplines and sectors with greater co-ordination to facilitate collaborative working.	Local implementation of standards continued via maternity and community services. Rollout of Antenatal Educators Training Programme continued.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.A</p> <p>Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.2.A.5.</p> <p>Develop and implement quality standards for school-age childcare.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partner: Tusla</p>	<p>Comprehensive regulations, quality standards and quality and regulatory framework for school-age childcare published with agreed implementation plan.</p>	<p>Public consultation on quality standards and comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare. Commencement of work on drafting and alignment of comprehensive regulations and quality standards.</p>	<p>Preparation of and consultation on final draft comprehensive regulations, quality standards and quality and regulatory framework for school-age childcare.</p>	<p>Commencement of comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare.</p> <p>Publication of quality and regulatory framework to underpin regulations.</p> <p>Publication of quality standards.</p> <p>Development of implementation plan, including training supports for the sector.</p> <p>Coordinated delivery of implementation to commence with a pilot alongside existing quality frameworks for ELC.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.A</p> <p>Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.2.A.6.</p> <p>Through the National Síolta Aistear Initiative (NSAI), develop and implement a national plan for the phased, supported and simultaneous implementation of Síolta, the National Quality Framework, and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, in all ELC settings for babies and young children, including making the application of these frameworks a contractual requirement of DCYA funding schemes and give consideration to, over time, making adherence to the frameworks a statutory requirement. Over the lifetime of First 5, review Aistear and Síolta.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DES and DCYA</p> <p>Partners: Better Start, NCCA</p>	<p>Phased implementation of NSAI.</p> <p>Review of Aistear and publication of updated version.</p>	<p>Implement the recommendations of the Review of the delivery model for NSAI published in 2018.</p> <p>Establish NSAI Implementation Office in Better Start.</p> <p>Implement 2019 work programme approved by National Steering Group.</p> <p>Initiate review of Aistear, including publication of scoping document.</p>	<p>Implement work programme for 2020 as approved by National Steering Group.</p> <p>As part of review of Aistear, publish updated research papers and carry out consultation, including with children.</p>	<p>Implement work programme for 2021 as approved by National Steering Group.</p> <p>Review new model for delivery.</p> <p>Complete consultation and publish updated Aistear curriculum framework.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.A</p> <p>Develop, enhance and implement national standards for early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.2.A.7.</p> <p>Through Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSCs) and Child and Family Services Networks (CFSNs), and linked to the development of the Children’s Workforce Initiative, pilot the development of “No Wrong Door” policy in services for babies, young children and their families to ensure that anyone seeking assistance and services is appropriately supported by the relevant professionals in their community. The development of a revised blueprint for CYPSC and Child and Family Support Networks will support the development of this initiative.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partner: Tusla</p>	<p>Clear policy platform in place, which connects all relevant structures for children and young people.</p> <p>Clear, unified and agreed local Integrated Services Delivery Frameworks in place under CYPSC and applied to smaller scale areas.</p>	<p>Publication of Blueprint for the Development of CYPSC will outline enhanced integration between CYPSCs and CFSNs.</p> <p>Piloting the Integrated Services Delivery Framework in the North East Inner City Initiative to give effect to the “No Wrong Door” concept.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Blueprint for the Development of CYPSCs.</p> <p>Implementation of the Integrated Services Delivery Framework and consideration of scaling same.</p>	<p>Continued implementation of Blueprint.</p> <p>Continued implementation and incremental scaling.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.B</p> <p>Progressively reform the ELC (and school-age childcare) regulatory and inspection systems and strengthen quality assurance, with a renewed emphasis on self-evaluation.</p>	<p>D.2.B.1.</p> <p>Over the lifetime of First 5, conduct a review of the Early Years Services Regulations 2016 and accompanying Quality and Regulatory Framework based on evidence of what best contributes to the quality of children's experience. Particular areas for consideration will include minimum regulatory qualification levels, indoor and outdoor space requirements, adult-child ratios and group size. Incremental changes to qualification requirements will also be examined as part of the Workforce Developmental Plan (see Building Block 3). The scope of the Regulations will also be considered for different settings, in particular, home-based settings, to ensure proportionate regulation.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partner: Tusla</p>	<p>Review of the Early Years Services Regulations 2016 commenced.</p>	<p>Pilot implementation of the Quality and Regulatory Framework as basis for inspections under the Early Years Services Regulations 2016.</p>	<p>Examination of implications of regulation of childminding and of school-age childcare for the Early Years Services Regulations 2016 and consideration of amendments that may be required.</p>	<p>Commence review of Early Years Services Regulations 2016.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.B</p> <p>Progressively reform the ELC (and school-age childcare) regulatory and inspection systems and strengthen quality assurance, with a renewed emphasis on self-evaluation.</p>	<p>D.2.B.2.</p> <p>Introduce regulations for School-Age Childcare and extend regulation to all paid, non-relative childminders. An Action Plan for Childminding will set out a plan for moving progressively towards wider regulation and support for childminders over the lifetime of the Strategy building on the 2018 Working Group report.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partner: Tusla</p>	<p>Introduction of comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare setting.</p>	<p>Introduction of initial (registration) school-age childcare regulations.</p> <p>Public consultation on comprehensive regulations and standards for school-age childcare.</p>	<p>Preparation of and consultation on final draft comprehensive regulations.</p> <p>Establishment of inspection team within the Tusla Children’s Services Regulation Inspectorates for inspection of school-age childcare services, with initial focus on response to unsolicited information.</p>	<p>Commencement of comprehensive regulations for school-age childcare.</p> <p>Establishment of full inspectorate for school-age childcare services within the Tusla Children’s Services Regulation Inspectorates.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.B</p> <p>Progressively reform the ELC (and school-age childcare) regulatory and inspection systems and strengthen quality assurance, with a renewed emphasis on self-evaluation.</p>	<p>D.2.B.3.</p> <p>Consider options for reforms to the registration and inspection of ELC, including childminders (and school-age childcare), to ensure a proportionate inspection regime and a more integrated approach to ELC. First steps include widening the qualification requirements for Tusla early years inspectors and piloting the extension of education-focused inspections to children under three.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: DES (Inspectorate), Tusla</p>	<p>Widening of qualification requirements for Tusla early years inspectors.</p> <p>Introduction of education inspections that cover the full range 0–6 in ELC settings.</p>	<p>First cohort of Tusla early years inspectors with wider qualification requirements to commence work.</p> <p>Literature reviews and consultation on education inspections of ELC for children aged 0–6 (including children under three).</p> <p>Collaboration between Tusla Early Years Inspectorate and DES Inspectorate in relation to inspection of ELC settings to enhance coordination and shared learning.</p>	<p>Ongoing review of profile of qualifications of Tusla early years and school-age inspectors.</p> <p>DES Inspectorate to pilot and commence education inspections of ELC for children aged 0–6.</p>	<p>Rollout of education inspections of ELC for children aged 0–6.</p> <p>Ongoing review of profile of qualifications of Tusla early years and school-age inspectors.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>2.B</p> <p>Progressively reform the ELC (and school-age childcare) regulatory and inspection systems and strengthen quality assurance, with a renewed emphasis on self-evaluation.</p>	<p>D.2.B.4.</p> <p>Develop and use appropriate methods to take account of the views of children and parents in the inspection of ELC and school-age childcare.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DCYA and DES</p> <p>Partner: Tusla</p>	<p>Tusla inspections will take account of the views of parents in the inspection of ELC settings.</p> <p>An agreed model for collection of children and parent views in education inspections of ELC settings.</p>	<p>Tusla to undertake research and develop a model to gain views of parents in the inspection of ELC settings.</p> <p>DES to research how best to collect parental views on the effectiveness of individual schools and pre-schools in education inspections. DES to examine methods of collecting information from children in education inspections.</p>	<p>Tusla to implement mechanism to gain parent views as part of the inspection process of ELC settings and to undertake research on ways to gain the views of children as part of the inspection process.</p> <p>DES to extend online questionnaires and surveys to collect parental information regarding education inspections of ELC settings.</p>	<p>Tusla to implement a model to gain views of children in the inspection of ELC settings</p> <p>Implementation of agreed models for collection of parent views</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 2

A robust regulation, inspection and quality assurance regime to enforce and raise standards.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
2.B Progressively reform the ELC (and school-age childcare) regulatory and inspection systems and strengthen quality assurance, with a renewed emphasis on self-evaluation.	D.2.B.5. Develop a revised self-evaluation framework for ELC to replace the existing Síolta Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) so that providers can assess their own performance along the quality spectrum, from compliance to excellence.	Joint Leads: DES and DCYA Partners: Better Start, Tusla	Enhanced capacity for self-evaluation of quality assurance in settings in the ELC sector.	Scoping work to be carried out by DES Inspectorate and Síolta Development Officer, in collaboration with other relevant bodies (including Tusla), to develop a self-evaluation framework for settings and explore a web-based support for settings to use the framework.	Proposal to be approved by NSAI and agreed with other bodies as relevant.	Initial CPD developed to support use of self-evaluation framework by NSAI Resource Development Group.
	D.2.B.6. Align the national quality improvement infrastructure around the Better Start Quality Development Service which operates nationally. Include a regional structure and increase support to the sector through an enhanced specialist service that provides intensive coaching, training and advice to improve professional practice.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES Partners: Better Start, NCCA, CCCs, national voluntary childcare organisations	Enhanced oversight of Better Start in place. Better Start delivery model reviewed recommendations introduced.	Enhance the oversight of Better Start, including commencing a review of the Better Start delivery model. Integrate the delivery of the new Aistear and Play CPD programme within Better Start's model of delivering mentoring and training.	Complete review of the Better Start delivery model. Develop recommendations for reforms to the model, linked to the wider review of the national and local operating systems for ELC (and school-age childcare).	Commence implementation of recommendations supporting alignment of national quality improvement infrastructure around the Better Start Quality Development Service.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.A</p> <p>Identify and put in place the staff requirements to deliver early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.3.A.1.</p> <p>In line with the principles set out in Sláintecare, develop a dedicated child health workforce adopting a population-based approach focussed initially in areas of high population density and disadvantage, recognising that this will require additional resources.</p>	<p>Lead: DoH</p> <p>Partners: DCYA and other Departments and Agencies to be determined on establishment of steering group.</p>	<p>Develop and pilot a model of practice designed to underpin and drive implementation and evaluation of a dedicated child health workforce.</p> <p>A model of practice takes account of international evidence; it is a comprehensive research process including review of other staffing frameworks. It will assist in identifying all the components required for a dedicated child health workforce. It will also include consideration of any new elements required for child health, having regard to First 5.</p>	<p>Establish a steering group and commence scoping the process which leads to the development of a model of practice to underpin a dedicated child health workforce, (subject to resources being made available).</p>	<p>Develop a model of practice and identify suitable potential pilot sites to test the and evaluate the impact of the model of practice on a small scale.</p>	<p>Commence testing in pilot sites and collect data to inform subsequent evaluation (subject to resources being made available through Estimates process).</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.A</p> <p>Identify and put in place the staff requirements to deliver early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.3.A.2.</p> <p>Develop the Tusla multi-annual strategic workforce plan, focussing on innovative approaches to recruiting and retaining social workers and family support practitioners. Include a pilot scheme of funded bursaries for Traveller and Roma students to become Tusla social workers or social care workers.</p>	<p>Lead: Tusla</p>	<p>Implementation of Tusla multi-annual strategic workforce plan.</p>	<p>Development of Tusla multi-annual strategic workforce plan.</p>	<p>Commence implementation of the plan with a focus on retention and succession planning of social workers and social care and family support practitioners.</p>	<p>Placements for Traveller and Roma children to become social workers and social care workers.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.A</p> <p>Identify and put in place the staff requirements to deliver early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.3.A.3.</p> <p>Introduce a range of measures so that, by 2028:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – all regulated childminders will hold a minimum qualification (level to be determined by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs by end 2019 in follow-up to the Expert Group Report). An appropriate period of time will be provided to meet this requirement; – all regulated school-age childcare staff will hold a minimum qualification (level to be determined by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs by end 2019). An appropriate period of time will be provided to meet this requirement; and – a graduate-led ELC workforce, with at least 50% of staff (i.e. all room leaders, assistant manager and managers) working directly with children in centre-based ELC settings and coordinators supporting the work of childminders, will hold an appropriate degree-level qualification (with an initial target of 30% reached by 2021). 	<p>Joint Leads: DCYA and DES</p>	<p>Initial target of 30% reached.</p>	<p>See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan (action D.3.A.4).</p>	<p>See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan (action D.3.A.4).</p>	<p>See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan (action D.3.A.4).</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.A</p> <p>Identify and put in place the staff requirements to deliver early childhood supports and services.</p>	<p>D.3.A.4.</p> <p>Informed by the predictive model developed by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs for the ELC workforce, develop a Workforce Development Plan to ensure the appropriate number of ELC and school-age childcare staff at all levels in the sector. The Workforce Development Plan will support the achievement of the above targets. The Workforce Development Plan will also set out plans to raise the profile of careers in ELC (and school-age childcare), establish a career framework and leadership development opportunities and will work towards building a more gender-balanced and diverse workforce. Consideration will also be given to broader ELC and school-age childcare workforce, including those in inspection, mentoring and training roles and support for those who facilitate practice placements.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DCYA and DES</p> <p>Partners: To be determined in preparation of the Workforce Development Plan</p>	<p>A Workforce Plan for the ELC and SAC will be rolled out to address staffing capacity and quality.</p>	<p>Finalise the Terms of Reference of the Workforce Plan, and initiate Phase 1 of development of the plan. Phase 1 will involve development of a vision for the future workforce, guided by First 5. This will result in the identification of key goals and objectives for Phase 2.</p>	<p>Following the conclusion of Phase 1 of development of the Workforce Plan, Phase 2 will translate the key goals and objectives into detailed actions and implementation plans</p> <p>Commencement of any initial actions agreed in Phase 1.</p>	<p>Implementation of actions agreed in Phase 1 and Phase 2.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.B Improve access to high-quality initial training and Continuous Professional Development opportunities to ensure the staff involved in delivering early childhood supports and services are fully prepared for the demands of their professional roles.	D.3.B.1. Publish agreed criteria and guidelines for further and higher education ELC (and school-age childcare) qualifications including access and entry requirements; knowledge and content of programmes and the incorporation of supervised professional practice. These standards and guidelines will support the implementation of the Workforce Development Plan by helping to create a shared agenda, common practice and understandings of quality (ensuring that practice frameworks are reflected in training), clarifying the roles and responsibilities of training institutions.	Joint Leads: DES and DCYA Partners: QQI, further and higher education institutions	Professional awards from Level 5 to Level 8 to be available for practitioners in the ELC sector that provide a coherent training/educational pathway that is aligned with career pathways, and that support the professionalisation agenda envisaged in First 5 and detailed in the Workforce Development Plan.	Publish Criteria and Guidelines and implementation actions. Establish Independent Qualifications Advisory Board to review higher education (Level 7 and 8) qualifications in ELC in line with the Criteria and Guidelines. QQI to publish professional award descriptors for FET awards in ELC for consultation for finalisation by end 2019.	Higher education institutions (HEIs) to submit degree programme proposals for review. FET providers to develop curriculum and submit new qualifications for validation by QQI. DES and DCYA to consider mechanisms for implementation of qualification requirements for school-age childcare and childminding.	Phased implementation of new professional awards by HEIs. New FET programmes for ELC to commence.
	D.3.B.2. Introduce a redeveloped national subsidised fund for further and higher ELC (and school-age childcare) education to support the implementation of the Workforce Development Plan.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan (action D.3.A.4).	See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan.	See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan.	See overarching milestones for the Workforce Plan.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.B Improve access to high-quality initial training and Continuous Professional Development opportunities to ensure the staff involved in delivering early childhood supports and services are fully prepared for the demands of their professional roles.	D.3.B.3. Develop a national programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for the ELC (and school-age childcare) workforce to be delivered through Better Start Quality Development Service. Over time, this will develop links with the national structure for CPD of primary school teachers. Opportunities for joint delivery of CPD programmes where appropriate will be considered.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES Partners: Better Start, other partners to be determined during development of national plan for CPD	National plan for CPD for the ELC and SAC workforce. Learning and Development Unit within Better Start resourced to coordinate delivery of a national CPD programme.	Expand pilot funding mechanism for CPD participation through providing payments to services whose staff take part in Aistear and Play CPD. Carry out research on the efficiency and effectiveness of the pilot funding mechanism for CPD participation. Review structure and resourcing (including IT requirements) of the Learning and Development Unit in Better Start.	Commence development of a national plan for CPD for the ELC and SAC workforce, as part of Phase 2 of the Workforce Development Plan. Build capacity of the Learning and Development Unit, based on review of its structure and resourcing. Revise funding mechanism for CPD participation, based on findings of evaluation of the pilot.	Finalise and commence implementation of a national plan for CPD for the ELC and SAC workforce, as part of Phase 2 of the Workforce Development Plan.
	D.3.B.4. Review graduate training options and requirements for all professionals working with babies, young children and their families to ensure that appropriate specialist training is available, including training that is specific to early childhood and ensure all those working with babies and young children are supported to undertake regular CPD.	Joint Leads: All relevant Government Departments	See action D.3.B.5.	See action D.3.B.5.	See action D.3.B.5.	See action D.3.B.5.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>3.B</p> <p>Improve access to high-quality initial training and Continuous Professional Development opportunities to ensure the staff involved in delivering early childhood supports and services are fully prepared for the demands of their professional roles.</p>	<p>D.3.B.5.</p> <p>Develop an Early Childhood Workforce Initiative. This initiative will include the health and social care workforce and the early learning workforce, including ELC staff and primary school teachers, among others. Aligning with developments in the Quality and Capacity Building Initiative and the Nurture/National Healthy Childhood Programme, the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative will develop opportunities for all professionals working with babies, young children and their families to learn together and develop working collaborative approaches. The initiative will progress joint pre-service training and in-service learning modules on key issues of relevance across the early childhood workforce including child development, bonding and attachment, play, working with parents, working collaboratively, family violence and addressing disadvantage. The Early Childhood Workforce Initiative will also develop mechanisms to acknowledge and recognise effective collaborative learning and working (e.g. Team Around the Child initiatives such as Meitheal and AIM).</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: All relevant Government Departments and State Agencies</p>	<p>Publication of report and recommendations.</p> <p>(See also actions D.2.A.3 and D.4.B.8).</p>		<p>Establish steering group to oversee the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative leading on actions D.2.A.3, D.3.B.4, D.3.B.5 and D.4.B.8.</p> <p>Initiate a mapping process to identify the range of publicly provided training programmes and modules available to staff working with children from birth to age five (including ELC staff, health service staff, infant teachers and others) on topics specifically related to the development of babies and young children. The mapping process should identify the method of the training, ownership of the training package, suitability to be made available more widely, and any accreditation processes.</p>	<p>Finalise mapping process and prepare a report with recommendations on how to make training more widely available across sectors and disciplines in such a way as to facilitate joint learning between professionals at local level.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 3

An appropriately skilled and sustainable professional workforce that is supported and valued and reflects the diversity of babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.C Develop mechanisms to raise the professional status of the ELC and SAC workforce and support employers to offer more favourable working conditions to attract and retain staff.	D.3.C.1. Develop proposals for a structure to review and oversee compliance with new standards and guidelines for further and higher ELC and SAC education programmes and create a register of the ELC (and school-age childcare) workforce. This structure would, over time, move towards a professional standards body to promote and regulate the ELC (and school-age childcare) profession.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	Structure established for review of higher education awards in ELC, and pathway identified for development of a professional standards body.	Independent Qualifications Advisory Board to be established to implement new criteria and guidelines for higher education awards in ELC.	As part of Phase 2 of the Workforce Plan process, wider regulatory and registration functions to be considered.	Appropriate actions implemented as agreed in the Workforce Plan.
	D.3.C.2. Having regard to the Workforce Development Plan and alongside the introduction of a new funding model for ELC (and school-age childcare), examine the possibility of introducing further quality levers (e.g. extending the use of higher capitation payments) within the framework provided by the National Childcare Scheme so that appropriate incentives can be made available to attract and retain staff, in particular graduates, working with children of all ages.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	Workforce Plan objectives to be supported through planned evolution of quality levers within funding mechanisms (e.g. universal pre-school programme and National Childcare Scheme).	Focused policy assessment of higher capitation payments to be published.	As part of Phase 2 of Workforce Planning process, and in line with work progressing in relation to a new funding model, future evolution of higher capitation payments to be considered.	Appropriate actions implemented as agreed in Phase 2 of the Workforce Plan and in line with development of a new funding model.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
3.C Develop mechanisms to raise the professional status of the ELC and SAC workforce and support employers to offer more favourable working conditions to attract and retain staff.	D.3.C.3. Undertake a review of the types of favourable working conditions that could be supported to attract and retain staff working in ELC (and school-age childcare) settings as a key input to the development of a new funding model (described later). As part of this review, the optimal time for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents will be explored.	Lead: DCYA	Working paper on working conditions in ELC and SAC informing the reform of the funding model.	Working paper on working conditions in ELC and SAC initiated.	Finalise working paper on working conditions. Integrate outcomes of working paper into the reform of the funding model for ELC and SAC.	

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.A</p> <p>Continue to fund and support the use of research on the lives of babies and young children.</p>	<p>D.4.A.1.</p> <p>Support the continuation and use of Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) and, in consultation with key stakeholders, explore the potential value of establishing a new birth cohort.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: CSO, ESRI</p>	<p>Subject to DPER approval, the agreement of an extension to the current GUI contract for three years (2020–2022) to facilitate a further wave of data collection from Cohort '08 (the infant cohort) at age 13.</p> <p>Planning for the future of GUI from 2023.</p> <p>GUI Pathfinder Project to link GUI data with administrative data held in the CSO's Administrative Data Centre (ADC).</p>	<p>Three-year extension to the current GUI contract agreed with the contractor.</p> <p>Planning for GUI from 2023 progressed led by a tripartite planning group with representation from DCYA, the CSO and the ESRI.</p> <p>As part of this planning, consideration will be given to a design brief for the next phase and the value of a new birth cohort.</p> <p>GUI Pathfinder Project commenced that will link GUI data with administrative data held in the CSO's ADC.</p>	<p>Completion of pilot data collection for Cohort '08 at age 13 and associated outputs.</p> <p>Longer-term planning for GUI progressed.</p> <p>Continuation of GUI Pathfinder Project including publication of findings.</p>	<p>Completion of main phase data collection from Cohort '08 with associated outputs.</p> <p>Longer-term planning for GUI progressed</p> <p>Continuation of GUI Pathfinder Project including publication of findings.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.A Continue to fund and support the use of research on the lives of babies and young children.	D.4.A.2. Implement the What Works Initiative to support the mainstreaming of prevention and early intervention approaches across services to children.	Lead: DCYA	What Works initiative online resources (Knowledge Exchange Platform, evidence matrix and data hub, tools and resources) and enhanced capacity among those working with prevention and early intervention methods for children, young people and their families.	What Works Initiative online platform and resources developed, including evidence and data hubs. What Works Learning Framework and projects delivered. What Works funding measures to support networking and innovation delivered.	Continued rollout of Learning Framework projects and activities focussing on use of data and evidence to inform shift towards prevention and early intervention services for children, young people and their families. Continued development of online platforms and hubs.	Dependent on 2020 developments.
	D.4.A.3. Establish a First 5 research observatory to collect, organise, manage and make accessible research on babies, young children and their families across all domains of their lives.	Lead: DCYA	Observatory established.		Undertake scoping work on requirements. Agree partner. Establish and populate observatory.	Observatory is operational and periodically updated.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.A Continue to fund and support the use of research on the lives of babies and young children.	D.4.A.4. Develop a First 5 research and evaluation programme to support strategy implementation and build evidence around innovative and integrated service delivery.	Lead: DCYA	Research Plan. Research and Evaluation Framework. Research Partnership.	First 5 Research and Evaluation Plan developed and published. First 5 Research and Evaluation Framework established.	Research Plan implemented. Framework utilised to support research capacity.	Research Plan implemented. Framework utilised to support research capacity.
4.B Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.	D.4.B.1. Develop and roll out administrative data systems across child health, welfare and protection, and ELC services, including Maternal and Newborn Clinical Management System (MN-CMS) across all maternity hospital/units on a phased basis. Over time and as resources allow, extend MN-CMS to community services. This will contribute to the delivery of optimal services to mothers and babies post-natally.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Subject to relevant resource availability, significant progress made in the implementation of the MN-CMS across maternity hospital/units on a phased basis. This will help to provide a platform for integrating care across the primary, community and secondary care settings.	Progress planning in relation to the rollout of Phase 2 of the implementation of the MN-CMS across additional maternity hospitals/units.	Progress the rollout of Phase 2, and initiate planning for Phase 3, of the implementation of the MN-CMS across additional maternity hospitals/units.	Complete the rollout of Phase 2 and progress towards the rollout of Phase 3 of the implementation of the MN-CMS across additional maternity hospitals/units.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.B Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.	D.4.B.2. National Immunisation Information System (NIIS) (Phase 1) and a National Child Health Information System (Phase 2) to support the delivery and integration of child health services across community, primary care and hospital services. Over time, these systems should be accessible by parents. These information systems will also facilitate documentation and analysis of outcomes data.	Lead: HSE Partner: DoH	Phase 1 National Immunisation Information System live with joint childhood immunisation records.	Phase 1 – Achieve Digital Government Oversight Unit (DGOU) agreement to gather requirements and price for NIIS.	Phase 1 – Achieve DGOU agreement to tender for and implement NIIS, dependent on funding.	Phase 1 – Implementation of joint childhood immunisation records in NIIS, dependent on funding.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.B</p> <p>Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.</p>	<p>D.4.B.3.</p> <p>National Childcare Information System (NCCIS) in Tusla child welfare and protection services. Over time and as resources allow, enhance NCCIS to capture data on the full breadth of Tusla's work.</p>	<p>Lead: Tusla</p> <p>Partner: DCYA</p>	<p>Tusla transformed from a paper-based organisation to a digital workplace with all services supported by end-to-end secure ICT systems.</p> <p>Digital innovation being maximised to support Tusla in delivering better outcomes for children and families.</p>	<p>The Tusla Portal (Tusla's "Digital Front Door") was launched in 2018 to allow reporters, partners, professionals and members of the public to engage with Tusla via a secure online portal. The Portal will be further enhanced in 2019 to support the following services:</p> <p>Early Year Services Registration, School Age Services Registration, Child minder Registration; Commissioning Services supporting funding applications and service plan submissions from child and family service partners; the reporting of Retrospective Abuse Allegations; the integration with school attendance systems to support primary and secondary schools submitting Absence Returns;</p>	<p>Tusla Portal further implemented and covering all Tusla services to provide a "Digital Front Door" to reduce or eliminate all paper/forms being submitted to Tusla.</p>	

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.B Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.				<p>the reporting of Education Welfare Referrals.</p> <p>Further extend the NCCIS programme to improve the current system and to deliver case management solutions for Retrospective Abuse Allegations and for Residential Care Services.</p>	<p>The NCCIS programme further extended to improve the current system and to deliver case management solutions for Fostering Services and Educational Welfare Services.</p> <p>Providing a case management system for Children’s Services Regulation prioritising Early Years Registration and Inspectorate services.</p> <p>Progressing a digital integration with An Garda Síochána to support a secure and efficient digital notification process.</p> <p>Progressing Mobile Apps project to allow social workers to securely access and update case notes on smart phones.</p>	<p>The NCCIS programme further extended to improve the current system and to deliver case management solutions for PPFs and After Care services.</p> <p>Completing a digital integration with An Garda Síochána to support a secure and efficient digital notification process.</p> <p>Enhance the Mobile Apps available to social workers to support them in all aspects of their work.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.B Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.	D.4.B.4. An ELC Online Database to facilitate planning and development of ELC services, building on experience in developing the Primary Pupil Online Database (POD). Having regard to appropriate data protection and data sharing arrangements, this will facilitate the monitoring of children's progress as they transition from ELC through to the primary education system and onwards to post primary and beyond.	Lead: DCYA Partner: Pobal	Potential to have proposed/ provided statutory basis for the ELC database (and associated data processing and sharing); potential to have started developing the supporting ICT infrastructure for the database.		Consider the potential for an ELC database when preparing the policy paper and Heads of Bill for establishing a legal entitlement to pre-school.	Dependent on 2020 developments.
	D.4.B.5. Further develop the Outcomes for Children National Data Hub to ensure inclusion of relevant outcome indicators and its use in the design and delivery of services for children, young people and their families.	Lead: DCYA Partner: Tusla	Consultation Forum to be held with identified stakeholders and gather feedback on indicators as well as the public launch of Outcomes for Children National Data Hub. Recruitment of Data Quality Officers to maintain and update the Hub and be responsible for all information management functions.	Promote the use of the data hub to relevant Agency stakeholders and identify new indicator sets, as well as maintain and administer the budget for this project	To ensure geographic coverage of indicator revisions and support TUSLA in this project.	Continually build data/indicators, support TUSLA and users and support the publication of reports and analysis.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.B</p> <p>Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.</p>	<p>D.4.B.6.</p> <p>Consider, in conjunction with the relevant Government Departments, options to develop and publish more detailed current data about nature and uptake of paid and unpaid maternity, paternity and parental leave and flexible working arrangements including through analysis of Eurostat Labour Force Survey data, CSO general household surveys and other approaches.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p>	<p>Data will be published about nature and uptake of paid and unpaid maternity, paternity and parental leave and flexible working arrangements.</p>	<p>Pursue options to analyse data collected by CSO on a once-off basis in 2018 on care and work life balance.</p> <p>Publish results.</p> <p>Business Case submitted to CSO/ National Statistics Board for inclusion of questions on a regular basis in one of their household surveys.</p> <p>Explore possibilities of examining data on payments during maternity leave through data linkage.</p>	<p>Dependent on 2019 developments.</p>	<p>Dependent on 2020 developments.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.B</p> <p>Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.</p>	<p>D.4.B.7.</p> <p>Work with key Government Departments to assess what data relating to babies and young children is collected and in what format. Depending on the outcome, consideration will be given to the establishment of a technical group, under the BOBF Implementation Structures, tasked with making recommendations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the harmonisation and alignment of data collected (for example, recording children's date of birth rather than age or age band) to allow for more effective analysis and comparison; – the use of appropriate markers, including disability and ethnicity markers, where relevant, and – the promotion of data sharing in line with the Civil Service Renewal Plan, which seeks improvements in how data is collected, managed and shared. 	<p>Lead: DCYA</p>	<p>Dependent on findings.</p> <p>Information will be available on what data relating to babies and young children is collected across key Government Departments and recommendations will be made on the harmonisation of same.</p>	<p>Key Departments contacted.</p> <p>Catalogue created of what data is collected.</p>	<p>Dependent on findings in 2019.</p>	<p>Dependent on findings in 2020.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 4

A strong national infrastructure for research and data that is used to inform policy and practice alongside an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.B</p> <p>Develop and enhance administrative data systems on babies, young children and their families to assess the quality and support the delivery of integrated supports and services.</p>	<p>D.4.B.8.</p> <p>Develop rigorous approaches to capturing outcomes data of babies and young children at key development stages across child health and early learning systems. In particular, explore the potential for anonymised data from existing standardised tools to be used for analysis e.g. Ages and Stages Questionnaire administered by Public Health Nurses at two-year check.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: All relevant Government Departments</p>	<p>Data sources mapped and utilised for analysis where possible.</p> <p>See also actions D.2.A.3 and D.3.B.5.</p>		<p>In the context of the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (action D.3.B.5), scope and map existing data sources and feasibility of utilising existing data to improve understanding of outcomes of babies and young children at key development stages.</p>	<p>Explore mechanisms for data sharing.</p>
<p>4.C</p> <p>Put in place robust systems of monitoring and evaluation across Government.</p>	<p>D.4.C.1.</p> <p>With reference to the existing age-relevant indicators in the BOBF indicator set and the associated development of a regular reporting framework, a set of indicators for early childhood will be compiled and reported on. The possible addition of supplementary indicators relevant to First 5 will be considered.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p>	<p>Continued regular publication of updated indicator values in the BOBF indicator set.</p>	<p>Publication of updated values for the BOBF indicator set, including the publication of disaggregated values for the indicators.</p> <p>Identification of supplementary indicators.</p>	<p>Publication of updated values for the BOBF indicator set, including the publication of disaggregated values for the indicators.</p> <p>Reporting of data on supplementary indicators.</p>	<p>Publication of updated values for the BOBF indicator set, including the publication of disaggregated values for the indicators.</p> <p>Reporting of data on supplementary indicators.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
4.C Put in place robust systems of monitoring and evaluation across Government.	D.4.C.2. Building on and updating previous work, progress the development of a methodological approach to support and inform any wider Government response to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concluding observations recommending that the Irish state "... include children's rights impact assessments in the framework for integrated social impact assessments to ensure that fiscal and budgetary decisions are compliant with obligations under the Convention."	Lead: DCYA Partner: DPER	Methodological approach agreed and process initiated to pilot the methodology with policy units.		Commence the development of a methodological approach for children's rights impact assessments.	Finalise methodological approach. Make preparations to pilot test with policy units.
	D.4.C.3. Building on the EU Quality Framework for ECEC, develop a national monitoring and evaluation framework for ELC, including identification of a set of agreed indicators on the quantity, quality and targeting of provision, and regular publication of a national monitoring report.	Joint Leads: DCYA and DES	National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in place and publication of national monitoring report.	Explore potential to align focus of OECD Quality Beyond Regulations country report for Ireland with EU Quality Framework for ECEC (see action D.4.C.3).	Convene working group to develop set of indicators based on optional factors in EU Quality Framework.	Publication of national monitoring report.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>4.C</p> <p>Put in place robust systems of monitoring and evaluation across Government.</p>	<p>D.4.C.4.</p> <p>Develop measurement tools to assess quality of early childhood services commencing with a tool to measure and monitor the quality of practice in ELC settings. A national baseline study using the tool will be carried out, with a view to repeat quality reviews at regular intervals to assess progress in raising quality standards.</p>	<p>Joint Leads: DCYA and DES</p>	<p>Develop tool for measuring and monitoring the quality of practice and commence baseline study.</p> <p>Expert advice on policy development, especially in relation to the quality of ELC and examination of policies for quality provided through Ireland's active participation in OECD Quality Beyond Regulations project.</p>	<p>Scope development of a tool for measuring and monitoring the quality of practice, in the context of a development of self-evaluation framework.</p> <p>Agree funding and arrangements for participation in OECD Quality Beyond Regulations Project focusing on policies to enhance process quality, especially workforce development policies. In agreeing participation, explore the potential to align the scope with the EU Quality Framework for ECEC (see action D.4.C.3).</p>	<p>Commission baseline study of the quality of practice, using new tool.</p> <p>Background country report for Quality Beyond Regulations project completed.</p>	<p>Implement baseline study.</p> <p>OECD Starting Strong VI and accompanying country reports published.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>5.A</p> <p>Increase public funding in services and supports for babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>D.5.A.1.</p> <p>Increase public investment in high-quality ELC (and school-age childcare) for all babies and young children to raise the quality and address the affordability of provision for families, particularly families on low income. By 2028 the level of public investment in ELC (and school-age childcare) will be at least doubled.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p>	<p>Increased investment in ELC from 2019 baseline.</p>	<p>Successful estimates campaign based on high-quality data and evidence on the need for additional investment in ELC.</p>	<p>Successful estimates campaign based on high-quality data and evidence on the need for additional investment in ELC.</p>	<p>Successful estimates campaign based on high-quality data and evidence on the need for additional investment in ELC.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>5.A</p> <p>Increase public funding in services and supports for babies, young children and their families.</p>	<p>D.5.A.2.</p> <p>Deliver capital investment through the National Development Plan to develop the early childhood systems infrastructure, including ELC and school-age childcare provision, the new Children's Hospital and Urgent Care/OPD Units, the National Maternity Hospital and the Primary Care Centre Construction Programme.</p>	<p>Lead: DoH</p>	<p>ELC/SAC capital investment is addressed under action C.8.2.6.</p> <p>New Children's Hospital. Connolly and Tallaght OPD Urgent Care Centres built. Main hospital on target for construction completion in 2022.</p> <p>The National Maternity Hospital. Construction of new maternity hospital in progress.</p> <p>Primary Care Centre Construction Programme. Suitable accommodation to enable the Primary Care Teams and other community services to deliver the full range of services. New Primary Care Centres are being procured through lease agreements, Private Public Partnerships or through Exchequer capital funding.</p>	<p>New Children's Hospital. Completion of Phase A construction works (substructure works on the main site). Phase B works (7-storey above ground works) on site construction commenced. Practical completion of the Connolly OPD Urgent Care Centre building in spring 2019.</p> <p>The National Maternity Hospital. Decant works on pharmacy block and car park will be completed.</p> <p>Primary Care Centre Construction Programme. At the end of 2018, 127 Primary Care Centres are in operation with another 17 scheduled to open in 2019. 14 of these Primary Care Centres which opened recently were delivered by means of the HSE's first Public Private Partnership procurement process.</p>	<p>New Children's Hospital. Phase B works (7-storey above ground works) advanced. Practical completion of the Tallaght OPD Urgent Care Centre building in Summer 2020.</p> <p>The National Maternity Hospital. Construction of new maternity hospital on the St Vincent's campus to commence.</p> <p>Primary Care Centre Construction Programme. Construction and leasing of additional Primary Care Centres.</p>	<p>New Children's Hospital. Phase B works (7-storey above ground works) advanced.</p> <p>The National Maternity Hospital. Construction to continue.</p> <p>Primary Care Centre Construction Programme. Construction and leasing of additional Primary Care Centres.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
<p>5.B</p> <p>Develop more strategic approaches to funding supports for babies, young children and their families to deliver improved services.</p>	<p>D.5.B.1.</p> <p>In the context of a new model of parenting supports, adopt quality standards to underpin public funding of parenting supports in order to put in place a more strategic, consistent and sustainable basis for this work with a transparent framework for allocating resources.</p>	<p>Lead: DCYA</p> <p>Partners: Tusla, HSE and voluntary sector</p>	<p>Commissioning, funding, provision and performance monitoring of parenting supports are in line with agreed quality standards.</p>		<p>Background paper prepared.</p>	<p>Agreed quality standards adopted by Departments and Agencies.</p> <p>Quality standards linked to funding of model of parenting supports.</p> <p>Guidance to Departments and Agencies developed and disseminated.</p>

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.B Develop more strategic approaches to funding supports for babies, young children and their families to deliver improved services.	D.5.B.2. In the context of the Whole-of-Government Approach to Tackling Child Poverty, continue to work to determine the optimal design of child and family income supports to maximise their effectiveness and efficiency in reducing child poverty, while improving employment incentives. Continue also to develop multi-dimensional approaches to tackling child poverty, to complement child and family income support policies.	Lead: DEASP	Child income supports will continue to perform strongly in terms of reducing child poverty and incentivising employment, and, across the whole of government, the reduction of child poverty will be embedded as a policy goal.	The fourth annual review of BOBF, for the period April 2017 to end of 2018, is to be completed. This will allow us to judge progress towards the adoption of a whole-of-government approach to tackling child poverty.	Post-Budget analysis should reflect the continued strong performance of child and family income supports.	Post-Budget analysis should reflect the continued strong performance of child and family income supports.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.B Develop more strategic approaches to funding supports for babies, young children and their families to deliver improved services.	D.5.B.3. Develop and introduce a new funding model for ELC (and school-age childcare) that will support improved quality of provision without compromising sustainability for providers or affordability for parents.	Lead: DCYA	Resourcing in place to pilot funding model.	Expert Group appointed. Detailed project plan agreed. Research partnership established. First phase working papers progressed. Approach(es) to wider stakeholder engagement (e.g. consultative forum, public consultation, etc.) agreed.	Second phase working papers progressed. Stakeholder engagement process underway. Economic analysis completed. Legal advice secured.	Pilot model agreed. IT scoping initiated. Costed proposal developed for estimates process. Pilot services selected and preparations to pilot underway.
	D.5.B.4. Further develop the compliance framework and financial guidelines to underpin public funding in ELC and SAC, with an agreed mechanism to withdraw funding from settings that do not meet contractual requirements (quality or otherwise).	Lead: DCYA	Implementation and review of framework.	Ongoing work on implementing the compliance framework having regard to the rules of the DCYA funding programmes, particularly focussing on financial matters. Focus on National Childcare Scheme governance arrangements – financial guidelines to issue.	Implementation and review of framework to consider its expansion having regard to other matters such as quality.	Implementation and review of framework.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.C Develop appropriate mechanisms to accurately track progress in public investment in early childhood.	D.5.C.1. Building on previous work in this area, develop indicators to accurately identify public investment in early childhood across key spending areas and to establish the baseline against which progress can be tracked. In addition to tracking total amount of public spending in early childhood, develop and monitor additional financial and non-financial indicators (with appropriate international comparators) to track progress in the development of effective early childhood systems e.g. proportion of (average) household income spent on ELC (and school-age childcare), child poverty targets, take-up rates of entitlements such as parental leave, rates of pay in ELC.	Lead: DCYA	Indicator set to measure and monitor public investment in early childhood in place.		Establish working group. Undertake research on existing data sources and indicators.	Agree and publish indicator set to measure and monitor investment in early childhood.

GOAL D

An effective early childhood system

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Additional public funding that is strategically invested to achieve the best outcomes for babies, young children and their families.

Strategic Action	Action	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Output by 2021	Key Milestone 2019	Key Milestone 2020	Key Milestone 2021
5.C Develop appropriate mechanisms to accurately track progress in public investment in early childhood.	D.5.C.2. Continue to undertake Social Impact Assessments of investment in early childhood, commencing with a review of the social impact of recent changes to funding for ELC and school-age childcare.	Joint Leads: All relevant Government Departments	Papers published periodically as part of the Social Impact Assessment Series.	Papers published periodically as part of the Social Impact Assessment Series, guided by the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service Social Impact Assessment Framework.	Papers published periodically as part of the Social Impact Assessment Series. Analysis of data available from the first year of operation of the National Childcare Scheme.	Papers published periodically as part of the Social Impact Assessment Series. Ongoing analysis of data available from the National Childcare Scheme including impacts of any changes to eligibility, thresholds, subsidy rates etc.

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION



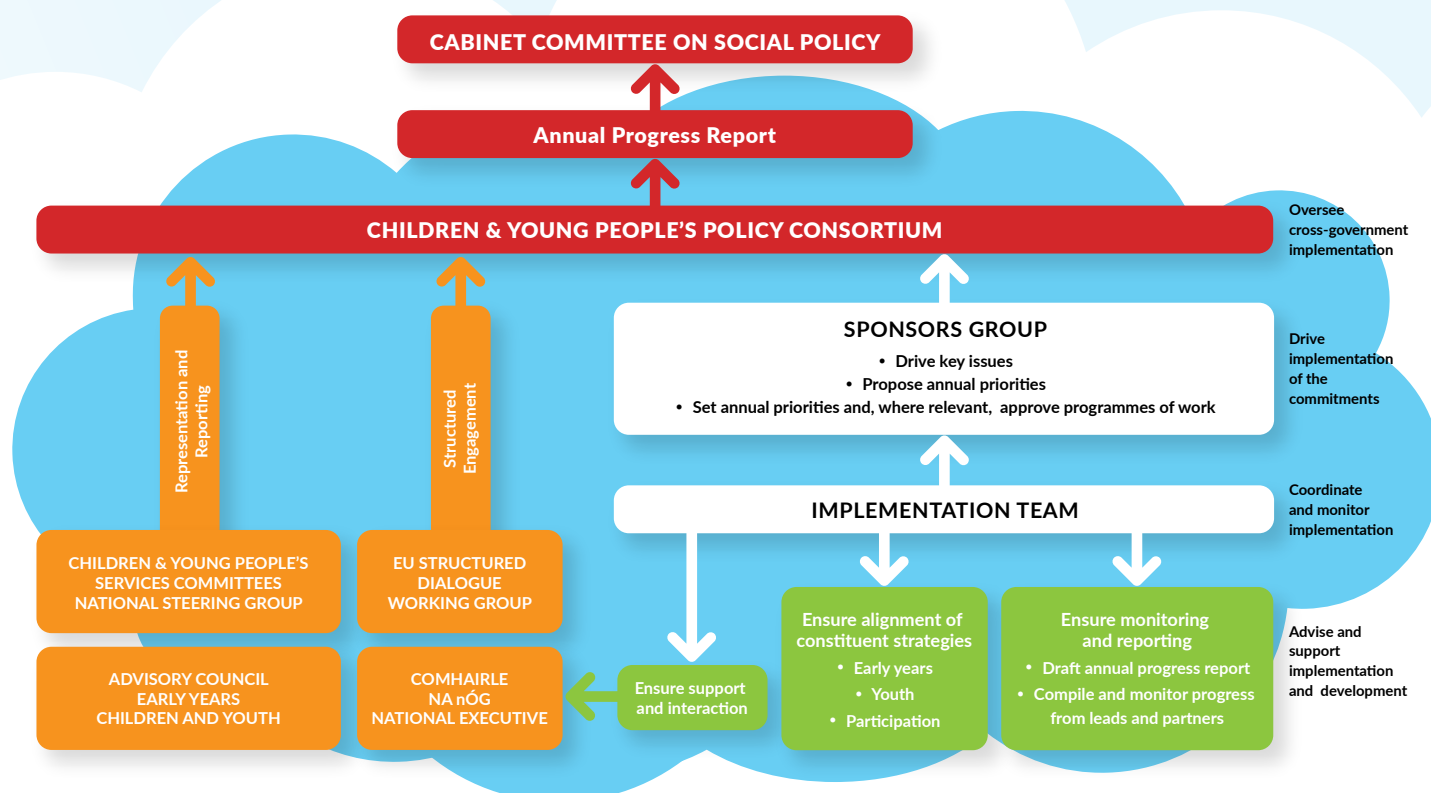
SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

First 5 recognises the importance of strong collaboration between Government Departments, State Agencies and others in the pursuit of better outcomes for babies, young children and their families. It acknowledges the interconnecting areas of work, and that babies, young children and their families benefit most when the work of all stakeholders at national and local levels is mutually reinforcing. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will provide national leadership of this collective effort, and ensure that national policy dovetails with local implementation. Implementation of First 5 is a shared responsibility across Government.



Faye, age 3

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Structures



Implementation structures

Implementation structures for First 5 will be located within BOBF's overall implementation framework. This enables a coherent approach to services and supports affecting babies, young children and their families. The implementation structures for BOBF provide an extensive enabling network for First 5. These structures bring together stakeholders across Government Departments, State Agencies, and the community and voluntary sectors, and will include the voices of children and parents. This connects national policy, local planning and service delivery.

Cabinet Committee

The oversight of and accountability for the implementation of First 5 ultimately rests with the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Services. The Cabinet Committee is chaired by An Taoiseach and comprises the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Business, Enterprise and Innovation; Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform; Justice and Equality; Employment Affairs and Social Protection; Children and Youth Affairs; Health; Education and Skills; Housing, Planning and Local Government; Rural and Community Development and Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as well as the Ministers of State for Higher Education; Disability Issues; Health Promotion; Equality, Immigration and Integration; Mental Health and Older People; Local Government and Electoral Reform; Public Procurement, Open Government and eGovernment and Gaeilge, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The Cabinet Committee is supported by a Senior Officials Group, which meets in advance of Cabinet Committee and provides cross-departmental coordination. Cabinet Committees refer substantive issues to Government for approval.

Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium

The Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium, chaired by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, supported by senior officials in the Departments of Children and Youth Affairs and An Taoiseach, comprises high-level representation from key Government Departments and Agencies, and experts nominated by the Advisory Council and Children and Young People’s Services Committees National Steering Group. The Consortium oversees and drives BOBF implementation across Government Departments, Agencies and sectors.

Sponsors Group

The Sponsors Group comprises senior officials from the Government Departments leading implementation of cross-cutting action areas in BOBF. Its members are also members of the Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium. The Sponsors Group proposes annual priorities in response to emerging needs. Senior officials from the Department of Justice and Equality, who have lead responsibility for policy on parental leave, and the Early Years Division in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will join the Sponsors Group. The direction set out in this Strategy will help to determine the Sponsors Group’s next set of cross-sectoral priorities.

Inter-Departmental Group

The First 5 Inter-Departmental Group will continue to meet. Membership of the Group and the Terms of Reference for this Group will be reviewed but it will comprise representatives from Lead Government Departments and State Agencies. Each member will be responsible for progressing and reporting on their assigned actions, liaising with relevant partners, where necessary, to work towards the achievement of the actions and the milestones. Members of the Inter-Departmental Group will report on progress on a bi-annual basis, feeding into the development of an annual report on the implementation of the Strategy.

Implementation Team

A First 5 Implementation Team has been established in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This Team will spearhead the coordination and monitoring of implementation of First 5 and ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to support implementation. Among key activities of this Team will be the establishment of a First 5 Research and Evaluation Commissioning Framework, the development of a First 5 Research and Evaluation Plan, the development of a First 5 Communications Strategy and the development of indicators to track progress over time.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council harnesses experience from the community and voluntary sectors, from academia, and from those with specific expertise in working with and for children and young people. It supports implementation through collective experience and knowledge. Nominations of new representatives to the Advisory Council will reflect the breadth of early childhood experiences. The Advisory Council will be invited to review and comment on the draft First 5 Annual Reports for the Strategy.

Stakeholder engagement

Engagement with stakeholders will be central to the successful implementation of First 5. Virtually every action will require communication and consultation with partners outside of Government Departments and State Agencies, including parents and children, the wider public, organisations representing professionals in different sectors, employers, community and voluntary organisations and other organisations with special expertise relevant to the particular action area, social partners and others. In some instances, there are standing groups of representatives which can help to inform and guide implementation such as the Early Years Forum and the BOBF Advisory Council, and in other instances bespoke groups, consultation approaches or engagement mechanisms will be established. While it is not possible to list every stakeholder for each action, it is implied that widespread engagement will be a key feature of the implementation of this Strategy.

In particular, special efforts will be made to develop approaches to engaging with young children and their families so that their experiences and preferences remain central to the implementation of First 5. The Implementation Plan outlines specific milestones to progress a framework for Children and Young People's Participation to be accompanied by guidance and training on methodologies and mechanisms relevant to children under six. The Parenting Support Policy Unit will also develop ways to engage with parents such as parent consultation panels.

In addition to consultation and engagement on specific actions and projects, First 5 contains a significant ambition to promote understanding of the importance of early childhood more widely, including through information campaigns for parents, families and the general public. A Communications Plan outlining further details will follow later in 2019.

Children and Young People’s Services Committees National Steering Group

The Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSCs) National Steering Group includes representatives of the key children’s services agencies at national level, including HSE, Tusla, and Education and Training Boards. The Steering Group links the Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium with implementation on the ground through 27 CYPSCs at local authority level. The Steering Group ensures clear communication channels between national and local implementation and supports interagency cooperation.

Jamie, age 5



Local planning and delivery infrastructure

First 5 aims to make best use of local planning and delivery infrastructure to drive developments for babies, young children and their families.

Children and Young People's Services Committees

Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) bring together a diverse range of statutory, community and voluntary service providers at local authority level. Their role is to enhance interagency cooperation and to realise the five national outcomes for children and young people set out in BOBF. CYPSCs support implementation at local level and drive local interagency work. CYPSCs are chaired by a Tusla Area Manager and deputy chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive from the local authority. Each has a local coordinator. Broader CYPSC membership includes senior managers from the major statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and their families. Each CYPSC develops and oversees the implementation of a three-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to improve outcomes for children in their own area. The CYPP outlines the CYPSC's priorities and includes a detailed action plan. The actions and priorities are derived from a local needs analysis and national priorities arising from BOBF. This Strategy is a significant policy development feeding into the work of CYPSC. The CYPSC Blueprint forms the basis of a work programme for CYPSCs based on policy and strategic direction from DCYA, the CYPSC National Steering Group and the BOBF Children and Young People's Policy Consortium. The Blueprint is currently being updated to take account of changes for CYPSCs around the country. Child and Family Service Networks (CFSNs) operate below the level of CYPSC as the local level mechanism to coordinate frontline agencies and organisations. CFSNs ensure that families can access services appropriate to their needs.



Local and Community Development Committees

Local and Community Development Committees (LCDCs) implement a cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming. LCDCs comprise local authority members and officials, State Agencies, and people working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations. They draw on the expertise of local public and private actors to provide services, particularly to those most in need of those services. These committees are responsible for developing six-yearly Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP). The key priorities of the CYPSC Children and Young People's Plan will be agreed between LCDCs for inclusion in the LECP of the local authority. These agreed priorities will contribute to the overarching Sustainable Community Objectives in the LECP. CYPSCs and LCDCs will engage on an ongoing basis on the implementation of the agreed priorities in the LECP.

ELC infrastructure

Organisations and agencies operate nationally and locally to support the administration and delivery of ELC services. At national level, Pobal manages funding schemes on behalf of DCYA. The Better Start Quality Development Service supports ELC providers through mentoring, training, and supporting implementation of AIM and establishing a cohesive approach to quality across the ELC sector. In each local authority area, City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) support parents and ELC providers, linking national policy and guidance with local delivery. CCCs play an active role in CYPSCs and other local networks. National Voluntary Childcare Organisations provide a range of supports for the ELC sector.



Aimee, age 5

PROCESSES FOR REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting progress

An Annual Progress Report, charting the status and progress of actions, will be prepared by the First 5 Implementation Team and submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Services. The Annual Report will focus on the achievement of the actions overall, with a particular focus on the high-level goals, strategic objectives and building blocks. Age-relevant indicators in the BOBF indicator set will be reported on alongside progress made towards the First 5 targets (see below). Supplementary indicators relevant to First 5 will also be developed.

First 5 targets

- By 2028, parents will be supported to look after their babies at home for the whole of their first year through a combination of paid family leave schemes. By 2021, parents will each have an individual entitlement to seven weeks of paid parental leave, which can be taken during their child's earliest years, to potentially allow children to benefit from an additional 14 weeks parental care in their first year.
- By 2028, all regulated childminders will hold a minimum qualification, all regulated SAC staff will hold a minimum qualification; and a graduate-led ELC workforce, with at least 50% of staff working directly with children in centre-based ELC settings and coordinators supporting the work of childminders, will hold an appropriate degree-level Qualification (with an initial target of 30% reached by 2021).
- By 2028, the level of public investment in ELC and SAC will be at least doubled.

The BOBF Advisory Council will be invited to publish a commentary on the Annual Reports of implementation.

First 5 review

First 5 covers the period from 2019 to 2028. While the overarching vision is set for the coming decade, the detailed actions in the Strategy and Implementation Plan are focused on the first three years. For accountability and continued relevance, a review of the Strategy will take place within three years. An updated implementation plan will take account of the progress of the first implementation phase, respond to emerging challenges or barriers, and reflect new actions required to address issues affecting the experiences and outcomes of babies, young children and their families.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES, RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

As specified in the original Strategy, resourcing of the actions outlined in the Strategy is required to be sought by the relevant Government Departments in the normal way through the annual estimates process and voted on by the Oireachtas, as is the case with all funded initiatives of Government. Lead implementers are fully aware of this requirement and are prepared to seek the resourcing required. Approval of expenditure will be considered by Government in the context of balancing a range of priorities, prevailing economic circumstances and political considerations. Major changes in these respects may risk compromising sufficient resourcing being available to implement First 5 actions. There will be sustained engagement at a political level in order to maintain awareness, understanding and commitment to First 5. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other Government Departments will also explore other funding sources (e.g. Dormant Accounts Funding and EU Structural and Investment Funds) to support the delivery of actions where appropriate.

There are significant expectations with regard to the implementation of First 5 and widespread aspiration that the actions will achieve positive change. However, given the breadth of the Strategy and the scale and complexity of many of the actions, there is a risk that implementation will not be achieved at the pace expected by stakeholders and the wider public. This Implementation Plan, which steps out the realisation of the actions over the first phase of 2019–2021, is part of the communications process about what can be expected and the likely pace of developments. It will be important that the necessary human and financial resources are put in place to ensure that this plan does deliver as intended.

The ten-year duration of the Strategy and the breadth of actions to be delivered may risk momentum being maintained over this extended period and continued priority being afforded



Leon, Age 4

to First 5 actions. The three-year duration of the Implementation Plan allows for more focus in the first phase of implementation. This will be followed by a review in 2021 to re-engage with Government Departments and State Agencies in light of developments at that point.

By and large, the actions in First 5 represent additionality. A lack of additional capacity and/or capability across Government Departments and State Agencies may mean that actions are delayed or not implemented. Existing staff may be deflected from actions by having to cover business-as-usual activity or to deal with other new developments which may arise. Strong communication between the First 5 Implementation Team and the DCYA Management Board, counterparts in other Government Departments and State Agencies bilaterally as well as through the IDG and the BOBF structures will enable emphasis on the importance of a sufficient and stable staff resource, succession management as required and on maintaining strong support and buy-in. There may also be some potential to address staff resource challenges by enhancing capacity through existing and new partnership arrangements.

During the implementation of this Strategy, the First 5 Implementation Team, in partnership with the BOBF Implementation Structures, will assess and actively manage risks to ensure the strategy's success. A Risk Register will be developed for the Implementation Plan, including the political and economic risks.



Zoe, Age 5

END NOTES



Endnotes

1. The *First 5* Vision of an effective early childhood system is underpinned by theory and evidence of what works. The systemic approach is informed by the work of ZERO TO THREE, a global organisation focused on child development. ZERO TO THREE brings together researchers and clinicians from diverse disciplines, providing resources for parents, professionals and policy-makers. The body of work emphasises the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach, with policies and programmes promoting good health, strong families and positive early learning experiences. Resources and information are available at: <https://www.zerotothree.org/>
2. Allen, G. (2011) *Early Intervention: The Next Steps*. London: HM Government.
3. Phillips, D.A., & Shonkoff, J.P. (Eds.) (2000) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington: National Academies Press.
4. World Health Organization (WHO) (2003) *Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum, and Newborn Care: A Guide for Essential Practice*. Geneva: WHO.
5. National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007) *The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Available at: <http://www.developingchild.net>
6. Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013) *Right from the Start: Report of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy*. Dublin: Government Publications.
7. Hall, D.M.B. & Elliman, D. (2006) *Health for all Children (revised 4th edition)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Denyer, S. (2005) *Best Health for Children Revisited – Report from the National Core Child Health Programme Review Group to the Health Service Executive*. Dublin: Health Service Executive (HSE).
9. Epsing-Andersen, G. (1998) *Equal Opportunities in an Increasingly Hostile World*. Trois Lectures II. Lecture Series. Available at: http://dcpis.upf.edu/~gosta-epsing-andersen/materials/equal_oportunities.pdf.
10. Davies, C. & Ward, H. (2012) *Safeguarding Children Across Services: Message from Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
11. Jackson, K.M. & Nazar, A.M. (2006) Breastfeeding, the Immune Response, and Long-Term Health, *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, Vol. 106, pp. 203-207.
12. Munro, E. (2011) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A Child-Centred System*. London: Department for Education.
13. Allen, G. (2011) *Early Intervention: The Next Steps*. London: HM Government.
14. Frost, J.L., Wortham, S.C., & Reifel, R.S. (2001) *Play and Child Development*. Prentice Hall: Merrill.
15. Ruhm, C.J. (2004). Parental Employment and Child Cognitive Development. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(1), pp. 155–192.
16. Merriman, B., Greene, S., Doyle, E. & McDaid, R. (2013) *Report on the Qualitative Study of Infants and Their Parents at Wave 1 (Nine Months)*. *Growing Up in Ireland: National Longitudinal Study of Children*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
17. Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013) *Right from the Start: Report of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy*. Dublin: Government Publications.
18. Russell, H., McGinnity, F., Fahey, É. & Kenny, O. (2018) *Maternal Employment and the Cost of Childcare in Ireland*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).
19. Urban, M., Vandenbroeck, M., Lazzari, A., Peeters, J., & van Laere, K. (2011) *Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (CoRe)*. A Study for the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture. London & Ghent: University of East London, University of Ghent.
20. O’Kane, M. (2016) *Transition from Pre-School to Primary School. Research Report No. 19*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).
21. Ibid.
22. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2006) *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD.
23. French, G. (2007) *Children’s Early Learning and Development: A Background Paper*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA).
24. Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013) *Right from the Start: Report of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy*. Dublin: Government Publications.
25. Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), Department of Education and Skills (DES), Department of Health (DoH), Department of Justice and Equality (DJE), Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM), Department of Finance (DoF), Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS), Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI), Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland