DEIS School Support Services

Fionnuala MacAonghusa
Dan O Shea
One year on……

• Transition

• Little change.....all change
Coming together

HSE
Child and Family Services

NEWB
educational welfare services

FSA family support

Tusla

Educational Welfare Services
Tusla – what is it about?

- Child and Family Agency established on the 1st January 2014
- Now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children
- Represents the most comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland
- Brings together some 4,000 staff and an operational budget of over €600m.
The job of Tusla

Under the [Child and Family Agency Act, 2013](https://www.gpo.ie/legislation/2013329.html) the Child and Family Agency is charged with:

- supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families;
- offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs.
- responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children’s attendance, participation and retention in education;
- ensuring that the best interests of the child guides all decisions affecting individual children;
- consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency’s policies and services;
- strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs;
- undertaking research relating to its functions, and providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services.
Tusla Corporate Plan

Strategic Objective:

• Improve the quality and focus of the delivery of services for children and families
Tusla Corporate Plan – as it applies to EWS

• Short-term outputs (1-3 years)
  – Attendance, participation and retention in full-time education is embedded in service delivery for all children.

• Medium-term outcomes (4-6 years)
  – The benefits of increased child and family participation in education is acknowledged across all sectors of society.

• Long-term outcomes (7-10 years)
  – All children and their families are actively engaged in their education
Tusla Corporate Plan

Actions relevant to EWS

• Firmly establish Educational Welfare interventions within the Tusla Service Delivery Framework [this is about making sure that educational interventions are unique but also related to family support and other child-focused services]

• Support schools, parents and children effectively in relation to engagement in education [this is the work of EWS!]
The three strands of TUSLA Educational Welfare Services

➢ SCP
➢ HSCL
➢ EWS

Committed to working in a coherent and integrated way to maximise attendance participation and retention

Building on existing good practice in schools
School Completion Programme

Aims

• To retain young people in the formal education system to completion of the Senior Cycle or equivalent.

• To improve the quality of participation and educational attainment of targeted children in the educational system.

• To bring together all relevant local stakeholders (home, school, youth, community, statutory and voluntary) to tackle early school leaving.
School Completion Program
restating our values

- Principle of Partnership
- Young person centered
- Preventative in nature
- Bottom – up approach
- **Inclusion based on agreed set of criteria (targeting)**
- Tailored needs based approach to individual students, universal also
- Integrated, inter-agency approach.

Educational Welfare Services
School Completion Program

- 124 Projects
- 470 Primary schools
- 224 Post Primary schools
- SCP necessitates the establishment of a Local Management Committee
- LMC is responsible for developing a Retention plan (a local response to early school leaving).
- A Local Coordinator is appointed who is responsible for implementing the Retention Plan under the direction of the LMC.
- Four pillars of SCP

Educational Welfare Services
And what’s new?

- ESRI review of SCP
- A challenging budgetary environment
- Greater need to focus support on those who are most in need of SCP supports.
Restating our values

• The underlying policy of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between parents and teachers. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance pupils’ learning opportunities and to promote their retention in the education system.
All change no change…..

• The scheme is preventative
• The focus is on working with salient adults in the child’s life
• The purpose of the work is to improve and enhance educational outcomes for the child
• HSCL coordinators are agents of change in homes, schools and communities
HSCL and Key Messages from Colleagues

• Communication is key
• Building relationships is key
• A targeted service focussed on better educational outcomes for children
• Tools for planning, recording and analysing
• Value of the home visit
• Challenge
Statutory Educational Welfare Service

• Who has obligations under the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000?
• What obligations does it place on School Principals & Boards of Management?
  – Reporting absences
  – Recording of Absences
  – Admissions Policies
  – Codes of Behaviour
  – Attendance Strategies
The sum of the parts......

“...a single, strategic approach reflecting equally the nature of and strengths of each of the service strands”
Delivering integrated supports - how EWS service strands aim to work on APR issues

- Be child-centred and proportionate in our interventions
- Intervene as a team around the child
- Intervene and support in a way that builds on and complements existing school systems and good practice
- Understand, plan, do and review
- Acknowledge that leading intervention can vary from case to case
The Intervention Continuum
Attendance, Participation and Retention

Advocate – Contract – Pressure – Warn – Enforce

The Intervention Continuum
Attendance, Participation and Retention

Intervene proportionately to move children to the left

Universal /Preventative (for all)
Targeted (for some)
Intensive (for few)

EARLY INTERVENTION
The Understand – Plan – Do – Review Cycle

Child in school, child and family participating well
General interventions – school policies, practices and services promoting good habits

Growing concerns - children’s additional needs for support have been recognised

Low level concerns - children and families supported as required

Major concerns (child not reaching potential due to poor participation or attendance, possibility of withdrawal from school)

Crisis (suspensions, on verge of expulsion, disengaged, no hope of reaching potential, chronic absenteeism)

In all Schools
Schools and the School Community
Educational Welfare Service

Home School Community Liaison

And additionally in DEIS Schools
School Completion Programme
Support for All

• Universal and preventative work supporting all children and their families to engage, participate, attend and achieve in school

• DEIS schools have additional resources in acknowledgement of additional need

• Schools identify the needs of their own cohort and draw up DEIS plan to meet needs
• Needs of pupils are met as a result of whole school policies and practices including curricular supports, Literacy and Numeracy initiatives, HSCL and SCP supports.

• Eg whole school attendance strategies, attendance monitoring and accurate record keeping
Support for some

• Students whose needs are not fully met under universal and preventative supports and require additional support
• Need for additional support or top up support might include one off or single strand intervention e.g. Home Visit, homework club, a curricular response, behaviour plan or mentoring, EWO advice
• Schools have protocols for targeting the students or groups of students needing more support than others e.g. SCP/HSCL target lists, care teams, DEIS plan
Support for few

• A small number of students in every school present with more complex needs
• They are likely to be in receipt of targeted support but their needs are not being met.
• Where the situation has escalated our response should be escalated to provide proportionate support to children and families in crisis
• A multi-disciplined, tailored, cohesive and structured response is required
• Meet the threshold for a request for service/referral to the statutory strand
Intervene proportionately to move children to the left

Schools and the School Community

In all Schools

Educational Welfare Service

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The Intervention Continuum

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Statutory Educational Welfare Service

• What obligations does it place on School Principals & Boards of Management?

  – Recording of Absences
  – Reporting absences
  – Admissions Policies
  – Codes of Behaviour
  – Attendance Strategies
Educational Welfare Officers…what hasn't changed?

A statutory service tasked with ensuring every child between 6-16 attends a recognised school or receives a certain minimum education

• Monitor attendance across the country
• Working in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools
• Support students in accessing school places
• Advise parent in relation to their rights
• Advise school on compliance
• S14 register of students
Educational Welfare Officers…what hasn't changed?

- Preventative and supportive... we are not the stick
- Intervene directly with the family and school where a student’s attendance is a concern
- Exhausts all welfare options before taking the decision to take legal action against parents who fail in their duty to have their child attend school
Educational Welfare Officers...what has changed?

- The way students are now reported... **School returns**
- School Principal to Refer those most in need of service ..... **Referral form**
- How we respond....... Understand, Plan, Do, Review
- Outcomes focused
Move to a referral based system

- Rationale for referral based service
- Pre referral checklist (add hyperlink)
- Referral form
- Notification of Expulsion
- Suspensions in Excess of 20 days (cumulative)
Key Messages from Colleagues

• Whole School Approach to Attendance
• Good attendance forms part of the ethos
• Accurate recording of attendance and absences
• Letter to other school notifying them of new pupil
• Adhere to your Code of Behaviour and constantly update them
• Admissions policies need constant updating
• Attendance strategies-focus on first years
Key Messages from Colleagues

• Examples of good practice and creative thinking
• Poor attendance on Friday afternoons-consultation with stakeholders
• Recent incident re mobile phone usage-no reference in Schools’ Code of Behaviour
• Detentions for lateness v rewards. How can we be creative?
• Parent Teacher meeting- ensure some teacher mentions it if attendance is proving problematic
• Texting Service-keeping parents informed
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