

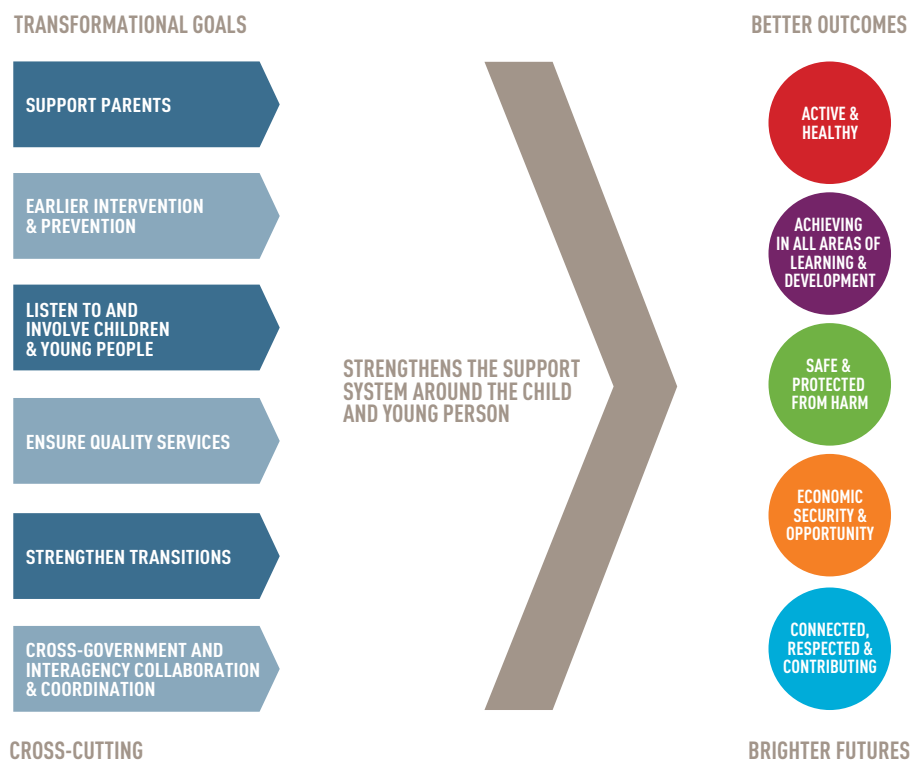
BETTER OUTCOMES BRIGHTER FUTURES

THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, 2014-2020

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS *BETTER OUTCOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES*?

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years), developed and led by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on behalf of the Government. Almost all policy areas have a direct or indirect effect on children and young people's lives. **The purpose of this framework** is to coordinate policy across Government to achieve better outcomes.



The Policy Framework

1. Aligns Government commitments to children and young people against the five national outcomes for children and young people.
2. Identifies six areas that have the potential to improve outcomes and transform the effectiveness of existing policies, services and resources in achieving these national outcomes.
3. Commits to measuring progress across the outcomes, with some key indicators selected to benchmark progress on key policy areas.
4. Establishes new cross-Government structures to support implementation and monitoring of the Framework and, as a result, realise improved coordination of policies and services for children and young people. These structures provide a fora for external advice and oversight from experts in the field and from children and young people themselves.

The commitments in the document are drawn from all of Government: many are current commitments, others are new. The Framework provides a means of ensuring their effective and coordinated delivery. The Framework is a recognition by Government of the need to **'connect'** nationally and locally, to use all of the resources available effectively to support our vision for children and young people, and a recognition also that we need to do more within the resources we have.

Who it this for?

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is for policy-makers and service providers, and covers policy in relation to all children and young people from the ages of 0 to 24 years.

What is the 'added value'?

1. An **outcomes** approach: The Framework aligns Government policy to five national outcomes and so will support greater cohesion in policy across Government.
2. A **Whole of Government** approach: Improving outcomes for children and young people takes coordinated action across multiple Government departments and agencies.
3. Focus on supporting **implementation**: The Government recognises the implementation challenge of converting policy into practice and has therefore brought a strong focus on implementation within the Framework.

One-third of our population is under the age of 25. Improving health and wellbeing, raising education levels and reducing inequality will all bring significant economic returns to society.

What improvements will *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* bring about?

Through the implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and supporting strategies, the Government aims to achieve the following 'shifts' over the 7-year period to support the achievement of better outcomes for all children and young people:

1. Support parents

- Parents will experience improved support in the important task of parenting and feel more confident, informed and able.

2. Earlier intervention and prevention

- Lift over 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020.
- Children's learning and development outcomes will have been assisted through increased access to high-quality, affordable early years education.
- A focus on health and wellbeing will have permeated society and positive progress will be made, in particular in relation to childhood obesity and youth mental health.
- Emphasis and resources will have been rebalanced from crisis intervention towards prevention and earlier intervention, while ensuring an effective crisis intervention response at all times.

3. A culture that listens to and involves children and young people

- A culture that respects, protects and fulfils the rights of children and young people will be evident and the diversity of children's experiences, abilities, identities and cultures will be respected.
- The views of children and young people will be sought and will influence decisions about their own lives and wellbeing, service delivery and policy priorities.
- Ireland's democracy will actively seek the contribution and engagement of young people.

4. Quality services – outcomes-driven, effective, efficient and trusted

- Government investment in children will be more outcomes-driven and informed by national and international evidence on the effectiveness of expenditure on child-related services with the aim of improving child outcomes and reducing inequalities.
- Resource allocation within services will be based on evidence of both need and effectiveness, and services that are not working will be decommissioned.
- Education in Ireland will stand up to international benchmarks and our young people will be leaving school with critical life skills, resilient, confident and adaptable to the changing world.
- Agencies charged with safeguarding the welfare of children will be trusted and their contribution to improving the lives of children valued.

5. Effective transitions

- Transitions at key developmental stages and between child and adult services will have been strengthened.
- Young people's prospects will have improved and the trend of significant outward emigration stemmed through a coordinated programme supporting youth employment opportunities.

6. Cross-Government and interagency collaboration and coordination

- The public sector will have reformed substantially, resulting in improved implementation, greater cross-Government collaboration and coordination, increased accountability and resource efficiency.
- The State and its partners will work better together and plan service provision in a way that is child-centred and benefits from interagency and multidisciplinary working.

How will this be monitored and measured?

Government will assess the effectiveness of the implementation and report on progress annually. A set of indicators has been selected to measure progress over time in several key areas.

The Framework establishes new structures to support implementation, ensure accountability and enable stakeholder engagement. Through the establishment of the **Children and Young People's Policy Consortium**, cross-Government collaboration will be achieved. Stakeholder engagement is assured through the Advisory Council representing non-statutory stakeholders, the Children's Services Committee National Steering Group representing agency coordination at county level, and the voice of young people is facilitated through the Comhairle na nÓg Executive and the EU Structured Dialogue Working Group.

THE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

VISION

Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

NATIONAL OUTCOMES

Active & healthy, physical & mental wellbeing

Achieving full potential in all areas of learning & development

Safe & protected from harm

Economic security & opportunity

Connected, respected & contributing to their world

AIMS:

Children and young people are or have ...

1.1 Physically healthy and make positive health choices	2.1 Learning and developing from birth	3.1 Secure, stable, caring home environment	4.1 Protected from poverty and social exclusion	5.1 Sense of own identity, free from discrimination
1.2 Good mental health	2.2 Social and emotional wellbeing	3.2 Safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation	4.2 Living in child/youth-friendly sustainable communities	5.2 Part of positive networks of friends, family and community
1.3 Positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health	2.3 Engaged in learning	3.3 Protected from bullying and discrimination	4.3 Opportunities for ongoing education and training	5.3 Civically engaged, socially and environmentally conscious
1.4 Enjoying play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and nature	2.4 Achieving in education	3.4 Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour	4.4 Pathways to economic participation and independent living	5.4 Aware of rights, responsible and respectful of the law

Children and Young People have a voice and influence in all decisions affecting them