

National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011 – 2016



MAIN REPORT

**National Strategy
for Research and Data
on Children's Lives
2011 – 2016**

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Minister's Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with this important policy document, which sets out a strategic direction and comprehensive action plan for research and data on children's lives in Ireland for the next five years. The availability and use of accurate information is essential if children's lives are to be better understood and, through that, improved. While many important developments have taken place in recent years, some gaps in our understandings about children's lives remain and this strategy will go some way towards filling those. This strategic approach will help to ensure the continued development of our knowledge on children's lives through the implementation of a systematic, harmonised and coordinated approach to research and data.

Good information is essential and can help us to understand how children and young people are developing, as well as assisting us in identifying the impacts of various policies and services on their lives. A more strategic approach to knowledge about children's lives can also help us to identify the most effective ways to intervene in their lives and to ensure that this knowledge is used by those in a position to make changes.

One of the key messages in this strategy is to make the most use possible of existing data and information. An important aspect of the strategy will be ensuring that data from the *Growing up in Ireland*, National Longitudinal Study of Children is used by as many researchers as possible. The study follows the progress of approximately 8,500 9-year-olds and 11,000 9-month-olds, and its main aim is to provide information about how children in Ireland are growing and developing within the social, economic and cultural environment.

It is clear that the commitment of my own Department to improving understandings of children's lives is mirrored by other stakeholders and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the policy. As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I will work with my Government colleagues to ensure implementation of this strategy in order to improve the lives of children and young people.

Frances Fitzgerald, TD
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Secretary General's Foreword

The recent Government decision to create a Department of Children and Youth Affairs, which incorporates the functions of a number of policy areas on children and youth (such as early childhood care and education, youth justice, child welfare and protection, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, youth work and cross-cutting initiatives for children), provides a key infrastructure through which evidence can be at the centre of policy and practice around children's lives.

The National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives, 2011-2016 has been prepared by the Research Unit of the Department. The development of the strategy emerged from a number of policy initiatives. These include the work of the National Statistics Board towards building an Irish Statistical System and a Government decision for all Departments to take a more strategic approach to their data holdings, in particular to develop and publish a data strategy. More recently, a commitment was given in the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* for the development and publication of a National Data Strategy on Children's Lives. The inclusion of *both data and research* in the current strategy is an explicit recognition of the importance of attaining a comprehensive insight into children's lives.

This strategy seeks to coordinate and mobilise research and data across a range of important bodies in order to achieve a better understanding of children's lives. It is, therefore, of relevance to a wide variety of stakeholders. The strategy sets an Action Plan under 5 key objectives encompassing 8 action areas, many of which focus on improved use of existing data and information holdings.

Development of the strategy over the period 2007-2011 was overseen by a cross-departmental, multi-sectoral Steering Group, chaired by the Director General of the former Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The strategy's development took account of a wide range of evidence and, crucially, incorporated extensive consultation with stakeholders, including statutory bodies, the research community, service delivery practitioners and children and young people themselves. This consultative and participative approach is reflected in the Action Plan in which more than 20 organisations have committed to take part in implementation.

This implementation will be overseen by an Interagency Steering Group. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is responsible for specific actions in the strategy and will have an oversight role in relation to delivery of the overall Action Plan. The other organisations that have undertaken to carry out certain actions will be responsible for the delivery of these items. We will, however, continue to work closely with them and with other stakeholders to ensure that the Action Plan is delivered and reported on in a manner that provides clear evidence for planning, monitoring and evaluating policy and services for children and young people. This strategy will play an important part in informing policy and practice developments by facilitating the creation, synthesis and transfer of the best available knowledge in the area for the purpose of ensuring services are made more effective and children's lives improved.

Jim Breslin

Secretary General

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Introduction

by Chairperson of Steering Group

The National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives 2011-2016 is the culmination of an extensive process of evidence gathering, consultation and analysis. It presents a set of objectives for improved understandings of children's lives and a detailed action plan to initiate achievement of this goal.

The development of the strategy was overseen by a cross-departmental, multi-sectoral Steering Group, chaired by myself as Director General of the former Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The group was previously chaired by Ms. Sylva Langford, former Director General, and Ms. Bairbre Nic Aonghusa, former Director. This group included representatives from the Departments of Education and Skills, Health, Justice and Equality, and Social Protection, the Central Statistics Office and the Health Service Executive, as well as experts from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the National University of Ireland, Galway. Membership of the Steering Group is given in Appendix 9.

Development of the strategy was led by the Research Unit at the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), under the direction of Dr. Sinéad Hanafin, Head of Research, and Gillian Roche, Statistician.

The participation and insight of the Steering Group into the key issues for research and data on children relating to their area of expertise, together with their cooperation in providing a liaison point between the Research Unit and their respective organisations, greatly aided the development of the Action Plan component of the strategy.

The development adopted a consultative and participative approach that involved extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, service providers, researchers and children and young people. In that regard, we would like to acknowledge the following in particular:

- Members of the DCYA Research Team, particularly Bairbre Meaney and Anne-Marie Brooks, and National Children's Research Scholars Susie Donnelly, Elaine O'Callaghan, Danika Sharek and Ruth Geraghty.
- The Health Promotion Research Centre of the National University of Ireland, Galway, particularly Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, Pauline Clerkin and Aoife Gavin, whose work was financially supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies.
- The DCYA Children and Young People's Forum (CYPF), established to act as a reference panel and advise the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on issues of concern to children and young people.
- The organisations and individuals who responded to the request for submissions.
- The DCYA Research Development Advisory Group, which provided valuable input to the process of development of the strategy.
- The many personnel from Government departments, agencies and other bodies that engaged with us in the development of the strategy, especially those from the 24 organisations that agreed to implement specific actions in the strategy.

We hope that the actions now to be undertaken in the implementation of this strategy will add greatly to our understandings of children's lives and thus will provide a high-quality evidence base for policy and practice, leading to improved outcomes for children and young people in Ireland.

Mary Doyle
Chairperson

Research and Data Strategy Steering Group

OVERVIEW

WHY A RESEARCH AND DATA STRATEGY ON CHILDREN'S LIVES?

This research and data strategy is published in fulfilment of a commitment given in the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* for the development and publication of a National Data Strategy on Children's Lives (Department of the Taoiseach, 2006a). The strategy has been developed in the context of substantial investment in the creation and transfer of knowledge for the purpose of improving citizen's lives. This has resulted in a growing knowledge base across many different areas and in Ireland, as elsewhere, has led to increased support and concern for evidence-informed policy and practice.

The initial intention in developing this strategy was to focus on data only, particularly on official and other statistical holdings, as has been the case with strategies developed by other Government departments. This strategy goes beyond this type of approach and both aligns and mobilises key issues of relevance to *both research and data* around children's lives. In doing so, it provides a framework for improving understandings of children's lives across all sectors, including policy-makers, service providers, researchers, children, families and communities. The inclusion of both data and research is an explicit recognition of the importance of achieving a comprehensive understanding of children's lives. Although there is much overlap between research and data, in general, agendas have evolved separately from each other and issues arising are usually addressed in different fora and through individual strategic developments.

The recent Government decision to create a Department of Children and Youth Affairs, which incorporates a number of policy areas on children and youth people (such as early childhood care and education, youth justice, child protection and welfare, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, youth work and cross-cutting initiatives for children), provides an important infrastructure through which evidence can be at the centre of policy and practice around children's lives.

This strategy, through its Action Plan (see *Chapter 5*), will play an important part in informing policy and practice developments by facilitating the creation, synthesis and transfer of the best available knowledge in the area for the purpose of ensuring children's lives benefit from research and data. While the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is responsible for certain actions in the strategy and will have an oversight role in relation to the overall action plan, individual Government departments or other organisations that have agreed to carry out specific actions in this strategy will be responsible for delivering on these.

An understanding of the effects of policy decisions, supports and interventions, as well as the factors in and impact of changes and transitions at various points in the lifecycle, is critical in informing decisions aimed at improving outcomes. This is particularly the case with children, where significant changes in their growth, development and outcomes take place within a relatively short period of time. Much progress has been made in understanding children's lives in Ireland. Further strategic development, however, can assist in:

- providing leadership in the area of research and data on children's lives;
- facilitating a comprehensive approach to understanding the lives of *all* children, with a particular focus on the lives of children with additional needs;
- identifying priority areas, minimising duplication of effort and maximising value for money;
- coordinating research and data developments of relevance to children's lives;
- systematically building research, evaluation and utilisation capacity.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY

A consultative and partnership approach was adopted at every stage in the development of this strategy, from the compilation of the evidence to the identification of priorities and agreement on actions to be taken. Development was overseen by a cross-departmental, multi-sectoral Steering Group, chaired by the Director General of the former Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs). The

Steering Group included representatives from the Departments of Education and Skills, Social Protection, Health, Justice and Equality, the Central Statistics Office and the Health Service Executive, as well as experts from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the National University of Ireland, Galway (see *Appendix 9*).

The development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives is underpinned by current theoretical understandings of childhood (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Lerner, 1998) and builds on previous national developments in the area of research and data, such as the biennial reports *State of the Nation's Children* (OMC, 2006; OMCYA, 2008 and 2010), the development of a national set of child well-being indicators (Hanafin and Brooks, 2005) and *The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook* (OMC, 2007). A systematic approach, incorporating a number of different elements, was taken to the development of this strategy. Specific elements undertaken were a review of relevant literature; case studies of international best practice in the area of data utilisation; an analysis of published policy documents (2000-2008); an examination of key data sources; and a detailed and systematic gap analysis. In addition, expert consultations and bilateral consultations were held with multiple stakeholders for the purpose of developing an action plan and implementation framework.

Taking account of the findings from this process, the strategy will:

- Take account of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of children's lives and how these dimensions are interlinked. These dimensions include:
 - **children's outcomes** – to be healthy, both physically and mentally; supported in active learning; safe from accidental and intentional harm, and secure in the immediate and wider physical environment; economically secure; being part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community, and included and participating in society (see *Chapter 2 for further details on these outcomes*);
 - **children's relationships**, both proximal, or direct, relationships (such as parental, sibling and peer relationships) and distal, or indirect, relationships (such as the relationships between stakeholders who are concerned with children's lives);
 - **formal and informal supports and services** provided to children and their families (e.g. support through family and extended family; early childhood care and education; public health nursing; and Garda Diversion projects).
- Incorporate an understanding of the multiple systems that surround children, including family, community and broader policy environment.
- Include positive aspects of children's lives (e.g. participation in decision-making, volunteering) and also negative aspects (e.g. child abuse and neglect, absenteeism from school).
- Include subjective areas of children's lives (e.g. children's self-reported happiness), as well as objective ones (e.g. prevalence of chronic illness).
- Collate children's views and experiences utilising different methodologies as appropriate, including qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Favour the voice of children, while also taking account of other stakeholders, including parents and service providers.

The remainder of this report draws on the multi-stage background used to identify the main issues considered in the development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives.

- *Chapter 1* sets out recent policy and institutional investments in both research and data at national and international level, and draws attention to the context in which these have taken place. This is followed by a brief overview of the current developments around children's research and data, with particular emphasis on the National Children's Research Programme implemented through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- *Chapter 2* provides an outline of the development of the present strategy, including guidance to support the process, the principal inputs and stakeholders in the strategy's development, the oversight and governance arrangements, and the process by which key recommendations were developed.
- *Chapter 3* sets out the information deficits identified according to the national service outcomes for children (see above). The main actions being taken to address these deficits are presented.
- *Chapter 4* examines cross-cutting issues influencing the research and data cycles, including strategic approaches, administrative data, building capacity and supporting evidence-informed policy and practice.
- *Chapter 5* provides a detailed Action Plan, setting out specific actions to be undertaken through a collaborative effort involving 24 stakeholders, including Government departments, agencies and other statutory bodies. The Action Plan incorporates a timeline for completion and key progress indicators, and is framed using the objectives set out below.

The report concludes with a list of *References* used to inform the strategy and 9 *Appendices* with additional details of source information.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STRATEGY

Aim

The aim of this strategy is to set out a plan to guide and support the development of research and data around children's lives over the next 5 years (2011-2016) for the purpose of ensuring children and young people benefit from improved understandings of their lives.

In doing so, it will work towards the development of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the collection, compilation and dissemination of research and data on children's lives and will facilitate the utilisation of good quality, easily accessible, internationally comparable information about the lives of children in Ireland. Through these, it will contribute to the development of more informed and responsive policies and supports for the purpose of ensuring better outcomes for children and young people.

Objectives

The objectives of the strategy are:

- to generate a comprehensive and coherent understanding of children's development, preferences, needs and appropriate supports and services;
- to develop research capacity in the area of children's research and data;
- to develop, support and promote good infrastructure in the area of children's research and data;
- to improve monitoring and evaluation of children's services in Ireland at local, national and international level;
- to support a continuum of research and data use within policy and practice settings.

1. CONTEXT FOR A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DATA ON CHILDREN'S LIVES

As indicated in the Overview, while there is much overlap between research and data, developments have generally taken place independently of each other. This is reflected in structural, investment and policy approaches, both nationally and internationally, where despite significant developments across both areas, the intersection between them has been limited. The main distinction being made in this strategy is that 'data' refers mainly to developments taking place in respect of official and other statistics, while 'research' refers to systematic approaches to the creation of new knowledge. The following definitions of research and data have been adopted:

- **Research** is defined as '*the search for new knowledge using scientific methodologies and approaches*' (Iwaniec, 1998).
- **Data** is defined as '*the physical representation of information in a manner suitable for communication, interpretation or processing by human beings or by automatic means*' (Eurostat, Concepts and Definitions Database).

The remainder of this chapter presents an overview of investment and policy made in respect of both research and data, and concludes with a short summary of key developments that have taken place in Ireland through the mechanisms of the National Children's Research Programme, as part of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).

INVESTMENT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN RESEARCH

Much Government expenditure on research over the past decade has been motivated by economic imperatives and, in view of the recent economic downturn, this focus, coupled with a best value-for-money approach, has become even more critical (Department of the Taoiseach, 2011). It is important, however, to recognise the connection between economic development and the achievement of broader societal goals, a connection well articulated by the National Economic and Social Council, which notes that '*Sound economic performance is not an end in itself, but valued because it provides a better framework for people to pursue fuller and more satisfying lives*' (NESC, 2005a).

The Irish Government has made an explicit and overt commitment to support Ireland's transition to a knowledge economy through substantial investment in science, technology and innovation in recent years (Department of the Taoiseach, 2002, 2006a, 2006b and 2008; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2009). Progress reports show that total research and development spending has almost trebled over the last 10 years, while investment in research in the Higher Education sector has almost quadrupled (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2009 and 2010). The Programme for Research in Third-level Institutions, launched in 1998, has awarded €1.22 billion (including Exchequer and private matching funds) to strengthen national research capabilities through investment in human and physical infrastructure (see www.hea.ie/en/prtli). The recently published Hunt Report draws attention to the range of benefits from investment in research in higher education, including improving the quality of education for all students, developing a cadre of highly trained PhD students, producing new knowledge to address national and international problems, enhancing international competitiveness and informing public opinion (Department of Education and Skills, 2011a).

A number of statutory bodies (including the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Science Foundation Ireland; Enterprise Ireland; Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences; and Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology) all have strategic and funding responsibilities in delivering this Government agenda. A national research prioritisation exercise is currently underway to identify a number of areas and/or approaches to tackling national challenges/opportunities to be underpinned by the future investment in science, technology and innovation (Forfas, 2010). The outcome of this process will create a focus for future investment in research.

Policy initiatives designed to develop the capacity and infrastructure to generate and utilise research strategically have also taken place. While a number of individual organisations have adopted strategic approaches to research developments (including, for example, the ESRI in its 2008 *Research Strategy*), the area of health research has been particularly prolific in this regard. In 2009, three separate, but complementary strategic plans on health research – by the Department of Health and Children (2009), the Health Research Board (2009) and the Health Service Executive (2009) – were published. The actions identified in these strategies provide an interlinked focus for developments around clinical, population health and health services research across different settings. These overarching plans can provide a mechanism through which other organisations can be part of a national approach to research issues arising; such organisations include Molecular Medicine Ireland (2010) and professional groups such as therapists (McKenna *et al*, 2010) and nurses and midwives (Department of Health and Children, 2010). Being healthy, both physically and mentally, has been identified as one of the national service outcome areas for children and developments in this area are therefore particularly welcome.

The focus on research in Ireland also reflects international developments and the substantial investment taking place in research at national level is mirrored in the development of a European Union policy and research investment framework. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, the EU has committed itself to building a European Research Area (ERA) with the aim of overcoming geographical, institutional, disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. Between January 2007 and April 2010, almost 3,000 applicants from Irish-based organisations (in the academic, industry and public sectors) have participated in proposals for European 7th Framework funding and have achieved a higher-than-average funding success rate (Forfas, 2010). This success is also mirrored in other indicators of successful research capacity development. A joint report by Forfas and the Higher Education Authority (2009), for example, shows that the investment in research is having a significant impact on the number and quality of peer-reviewed publications. This finding is also reflected at an institutional level and a recent report by the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government (2010) records improvements in relative European and world rankings of Irish universities, particularly Trinity College, Dublin (ranked 43rd in the world and 13th in Europe) and University College, Dublin (ranked 89th and 32nd respectively).

These developments are having an impact on the area of children's research and there has been a substantial increase in reports and peer-reviewed papers around children's lives in recent years. For example, a joint initiative between the then Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA, now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs) and the Health Research Board to create a database of children's health research of Irish origin or focus resulted in the identification of over 5,500 relevant journal articles in the peer-reviewed literature published between 2000 and 2008 (McCarthy and Foran, 2010).

Research governance developments

In addition to the investment outlined above, there have been many developments in respect of research governance, although no single organisation, nationally or internationally, has lead responsibility in this area. This is reflected in the number of initiatives that have taken place in recent years. For example, data protection is a critical issue in respect of research and there is a very clear legislative framework on data protection in Ireland. This is done through the Data Protection Act 1998 and the data protection (Amendment) Act 2003, which bring Ireland's legislation in this area into line with the EU Directive 95/46/EC on data protection (European Parliament, 1995). In addition, the Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection has published a number of guidance documents*, including regulations and guidelines dealing with the implementation of this legislation in general and in particular *Data Protection Guidelines on Research in the Health Sector* (Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection, 2007). This has an implication for research. Adherence to this legislation, guidance and regulation can help to ensure data at all stages of the data cycle are protected in the best interests of children.

* See www.dataprotection.ie/ViewDoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fguidance%2Fdefault%2Ehtm&CatID=6&m=7

Other developments have also taken place by national organisations, including:

- The Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (2004) has issued a *National Code of Practice for managing Intellectual Property from Publicly Funded Research*, under the auspices of Forfas, the National Policy and Advisory Board for Enterprise, Trade, Science, Technology and Innovation.
- The Royal Irish Academy (Acadamh Ríoga na h-Éireann, an all-Ireland, independent academic body that promotes study and excellence in the sciences, humanities and social sciences) recently issued a discussion document on *Ensuring Integrity in Irish Research* (RIA, 2010).
- The Irish Council for Bioethics (2004 and 2010) and the National Disability Authority (NDA, 2009) have developed ethics guidance for undertaking research with vulnerable populations.

In addition to these, there is a growing coherence in the approach being taken by public research funding bodies (e.g. Health Research Board, Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences) to ensure that data collected using public funds will be made available in an accessible archive for use by other researchers. Other developments require a national approach. Data linkage developments, for example, could be greatly enhanced by the adoption of a unique identifier, and this area has been subject to examination in the Irish context for some time. Background information on the development of the forthcoming Health Information Bill notes that its absence has been identified as a critical gap, particularly by those in the education and health sectors, since its absence reduces the possibilities for linkage of data across different datasets and consequently dilutes the possibilities of meaningful analysis of data over time, households and services.

There is, therefore, a growing body of work taking place on the creation of an infrastructure in Ireland around research governance. It will be important that children's issues are given consideration within this framework.

INVESTMENT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN DATA

There have been substantial changes in recent years in how statistics are compiled, analysed, produced and disseminated. These changes have been stimulated, and supported, by changes in technology and also by increased demands for data and developments in data sources. In that regard, Ireland has made significant progress led by the National Statistics Board and the Central Statistics Office.

Although the primary objective of the **Central Statistics Office** (CSO) is to support Government, as the national statistical institute it also serves the needs of the wider national and international community (e.g. business, EU, international organisations, media, researchers and the general public) for impartial and relevant information on social and economic conditions. Many of the developments around data and official statistics in Ireland have had a direct impact on improving understandings of children's lives. The commitment to this area by the CSO is evidenced by its direct involvement in a number of projects and initiatives involving children and young people, including the development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives.

In contrast to the context for research, there is a coordinated strategic approach to official statistics led by the **National Statistics Board** (NSB) in Ireland. This approach, coupled with the work of the CSO, has resulted in substantial progress in developing good data structures to facilitate the production, availability, accessibility and utilisation of robust data about people's lives in Ireland. The NSB is tasked in legislation, through the Statistics Act 1993, with responsibility to Government for developing its statistical strategy. This responsibility includes the setting of priorities for the compilation and development of official statistics in Ireland, as well as guiding the strategic direction of the CSO. A number of significant achievements in developing a whole-system approach to national statistics are set out in the National Statistics Board's *Strategy for Statistics 2009-2014* (NSB, 2009), including:

- **An assessment of the Statistical Potential of Administrative Records (SPAR)** carried out by the CSO via a series of in-depth examinations of data holdings in Government departments and agencies, each of which contained detailed recommendations to increase the statistical value of administrative data (NSB, 2003).
- **Development of formal data strategies** in some Government departments, including the prioritisation of data needs and identification of critical data gaps. Of particular relevance to children's lives are those published by the Departments of Education and Science, Social and Family Affairs, and Transport, all of which include recommendations of importance to improving the knowledge base around children's lives. The strategy published by the Department of Education and Science (2008), for example, identifies improvements in data and data systems around children in the education system as key priorities.
- **Development of a set of statistical frameworks** and their use in a series of thematic reports, as well as other initiatives that add value to existing data collections and/or integrate data sources. Within these developments, children and young people have featured as a prominent group – firstly, through the CSO (2009) publication on *Children and Young People in Ireland, 2008* and, secondly, through the CSO's contribution to the *State of the Nation's Children* report, published biennially by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2006, 2008 and 2010), now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).
- **Development of the Irish statistical system** through the placement of professional staff in Government departments (including in the DCYA) and CSO participation on interdepartmental and advisory committees (including their involvement in the Research and Data Strategy Steering Group, the National Children's Data and Research Strategy Steering Group, the Research Development Advisory Group of the National Children's Research Programme, and the governance of the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing Up in Ireland*), as well as greater use of standard classification and coding systems in surveys and administrative data sources.

Each of the strategic priorities identified by the National Statistics Board (2009) for the period 2009-2014 will assist in building on the progress made in statistics around children's lives in recent years and will link with key action areas included in the present strategy. These priorities are:

- to ensure that the Irish statistical system is coherent and that the potential to produce relevant, impartial and reliable statistics to inform policy and fiscal decisions is fully realised;
- to increase value for money and efficient use of resources by prioritising investment in statistics (including data processing, sharing, storage and protection) across Government departments and agencies, and by ensuring that official statistics can be used in all aspects of Government decision-making;
- to develop systems to ensure that the burden of response on businesses, households and individuals is minimised and that the statistical value of existing survey and administrative data is maximised through the addition of consistent classification variables and data-matching identifiers;
- to ensure that official statistics are 'fit for purpose' by balancing relevance, timeliness, cost and quality of data, so that critical gaps are filled and new demands are met;
- to build on the progress of recent years by continuing to prioritise availability to users by improving access channels and promoting use of CSO statistics.

In parallel with the national coordinated approach to official data and statistics outlined above, there is an international strategic approach to this area, which is underpinned by a high level commitment to the importance of statistics in society. This commitment has been clearly articulated by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union, which notes that '*Democratic societies do not function properly without a solid basis of reliable and objective statistics*' (Eurostat, 2008, p. 1).

Similarly, the United Nations' (2004) *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* state that '*Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation*'.

In summary, developments around official statistics in recent years have operated in a more coordinated way in Ireland and internationally than those relating to research. The National Statistics Board and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) have had a strong leadership role in this and have provided guidance across a number of different areas. In addition, the CSO has been directly involved in areas of direct relevance to children's lives through a number of different initiatives, including the *State of the Nation's Children* reports, the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland and the publication of statistics around children's lives.

NATIONAL INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S RESEARCH

Developments in improving understandings of children's lives have intersected both research and data, and while many initiatives have taken place within the context of the considerable strategic, infrastructural and financial investment outlined earlier, many other developments have also made a contribution to our knowledge base on children's lives. In Ireland, statutory bodies, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders have all engaged in commissioning, compiling and publishing research findings and statistical information around children's lives.

A number of studies with international links and which allow for comparisons with other countries have also been funded and carried out in Ireland. The European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), for example, which provides information on income and poverty throughout the EU Member States, is funded through Government and implemented and reported on by the CSO. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the Department of Education and Skills also fund major internationally comparable studies. The DCYA, for example, funds and oversees the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey, which has, since 1998, been carried out by the Health Promotion Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway. In the field of education, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Survey and, most recently, the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study are funded by the Department of Education and Skills, and are implemented through the Education Research Centre, Drumcondra.

Considerable progress has also taken place in relation to administrative data sources and a number of significant improvements have been initiated either on a pilot/geographic basis or are currently in the process of development. These include administrative data relating to children's health (e.g. Personal Health Record), education (e.g. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Database) and safety (e.g. National Child Care Information System).

In the course of the development of the present strategy, it was clear that many different organisations and researchers were involved in the creation of knowledge about children's lives. Given the diversity of interests and multiplicity of stakeholders in the generation of this knowledge, it is clear there is a need to develop a mechanism to ensure coordination and harmonisation of these efforts. Such an approach would assist in ensuring maximum use of limited resources, while also reducing duplication of effort.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The National Children's Strategy, published in 2000 by the Department of Health and Children, is one of the most significant developments around children's lives in Ireland. The strategy set out a cross-Government approach to improving children's lives by listening, thinking and acting with and for children in a coordinated way. Within the strategy, three national goals were identified: to give children a voice in matters that affect them, to improve understandings of their lives and to provide quality supports and services for them. The exact wording of Goal 2 of the National Children's Strategy is that '*Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services*'.

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs) has been in the process of implementing Goal 2 through the development and execution of a National Children's Research Programme, the objectives to which are to achieve:

- a more coherent understanding of children's development and needs among those working with children;
- an evidence-based approach to decision-making at all levels, down to the point of service delivery;
- improvements in the commissioning, production and dissemination of research and information;
- improvements in monitoring and evaluation of children's services.

A recent review on the implementation of the National Children's Strategy reported that progress on the implementation of Goal 2 had been 'impressive', with all actions set out under it either partially or fully implemented (Children's Rights Alliance, 2011). As well as those actions, additional developments have also been initiated as the National Children's Research Programme has evolved over time. The programme comprises four main elements, as follows:

- a commissioned (funded) research programme;
- a capacity-building programme;
- a programme to develop the infrastructure around research and data on children's lives;
- developments in respect of the transfer of knowledge about children's lives.

A summary of these main elements is now presented.

Commissioned research programme

The commissioned research programme is run by the Research Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It is underpinned by a holistic understanding of children's lives set out within the National Children's Strategy and takes account of the lives of all children, with a particular focus on children with additional needs. Crucially, this programme favours the voice of children, while also explicitly acknowledging the role played by families, communities and formal supports in their lives. Since its inception, 31 studies focusing on different areas of children's lives have been funded under the programme. These include studies about services and supports for children (e.g. young people on remand; children's experiences of the child protection services); their relationships with their families (e.g. young carers; children and parents' views on parental discipline) and their outcomes (e.g. their understandings of well-being). A complete list of these studies is presented in Appendix 1 and individual reports are available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or through 'publications' on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' website (www.dcy.a.ie).

The largest study commissioned under this programme is the **National Longitudinal Study of Children, Growing up in Ireland**, which follows the progress of approximately 8,500 9-year-olds and 11,000 9-month-olds. The main aim of the study is to provide information about how children in Ireland are growing and developing within the social, economic and cultural environment. This information is being used to assist in policy formation and in the provision of services, and it will help to ensure all children have the best possible start in life.

The study is funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, in association with the Department of Social Protection and the Central Statistics Office, at a cost of €29 million for the first 7 years. The first phase of the study is being carried out by a consortium of researchers led by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College, Dublin. Ensuring maximisation of use of the data from this study will be an important aspect of this strategic development.

The most recent development in this programme has been a partnership with the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), through whose Research Development Initiative policy-relevant research in the areas of child protection and participation in decision-making has been commissioned. In addition, three summer schools promoting increased use of existing data holdings have been delivered under this scheme.

Capacity-building programme

Much has been written about the need to build capacity and to adhere to good practices in carrying out research on children's lives. A capacity-building programme has been underway since 2001 and includes support for:

- **National Children's Research Scholarship Programme**, with 40 Masters/PhD scholarships awarded to date. A list of studies supported under this programme is presented in Appendix 2.
- **National Children's Research Placement Programme**, with 17 placements awarded and hosted by the Research Unit to date. Successful candidates have been in the process of completing their Masters/PhD or those who have completed a Masters degree and are considering a research career.
- **Funding to support the PhD programme in Child and Youth Research**, hosted jointly by Trinity College, Dublin and the National University of Ireland, Galway.

A programme to develop the infrastructure around research and data on children's lives

The DCYA has been in the process of developing a research and data infrastructure around children's lives and has been working with data providers to develop, enhance and improve relevant data. An important element of this work was the development of a national set of child well-being indicators by Hanafin and Brooks in 2005 and the subsequent biennial publication of the report ***State of the Nation's Children***, commencing in 2006. This report, compiled by the DCYA in association with the CSO and the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway, brings together data from about 48 indicator areas of children's lives (including children's outcomes, relationships, services and supports) and draws on 22 different data sources.

The main purpose of the report is:

- to chart the well-being of children in Ireland;
- to track changes over time;
- to benchmark progress in Ireland relative to other countries;
- to highlight policy issues arising.

To date, each *State of the Nation's Children* report has presented data improvements and the most recent report in 2010 provided newly developed information about children's nutritional outcomes, the quality of early childhood care and education, and children's disability (OMCYA, 2010).

Knowledge transfer around children's lives

Active dissemination of information about children's lives has formed a focus for the implementation of the National Children's Research Programme. While studies carried out under the programme are promoted and disseminated, a more strategic approach has also been underway through the development of a database of children's research.

This database, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie, is a web portal providing access to research and data on children for various stakeholders, including policy-makers, Government departments, academics, voluntary organisations and the general public, among others. It incorporates a number of different elements, such as Irish Government policy documents, a collection of databases, specialist libraries, Irish, European and international resources and the *State of the Nation's Children* reports. In 2010, four new collections were added to the database, relating to:

- children in detention (made available from the Children Acts Advisory Board);
- child protection literature (made available from the Children Acts Advisory Board);
- interagency working (made available from the Children Acts Advisory Board);
- child health peer-reviewed literature, developed in a joint initiative between the OMCYA and the Health Research Board (McCarthy and Foran, 2010).

This web portal is under continuous review and further development of the system will be an important component of the present strategy.

Other developments in this area include the publication of key Research Briefing Notes from funded studies, including Masters and PhDs, and the hosting of seminars on various elements of the overall programme.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

In addition to the above developments, a joint-funded programme by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and The Atlantic Philanthropies has been underway for the purpose of developing comprehensive community initiatives utilising innovative methods for improving outcomes for children and their families. This Early Intervention Programme, with a total funding of €36 million, comprises three community-based project areas:

- Childhood Development Initiative – A Place for Children in Tallaght West;
- Preparing for Life (Northside communities of Belcamp, Darndale and Moatview);
- Youngballymun.

Service implementation for these three projects involves action among a range of local service providers in collaboration with their local communities, including a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies working across sectors and collaborating in both service design and interagency delivery.

The model underpinning this programme is based on evidence of need in the community and an evidence-informed approach to 'what works'. A key element of the programme is the rigorous and robust ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of the activities undertaken and learning from the individual sites. This evaluation is intended to promote a process of continuous improvement and helps to assess what interventions work best and how and where they can be best employed in improving delivery of services or the development of new policy. It is also intended that this will guide re-orientation of current services where the evidence indicates that this should happen.

SUMMARY

In summary, significant national and international investment in the creation and transfer of knowledge to improve the lives of citizens has been underway over the last 10 years and this has had an impact on our knowledge base around children's lives. These developments have involved multiple stakeholders, including statutory and non-governmental organisations, and have taken account of the breadth of children's lives. The National Children's Research Programme, delivered through the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs), has provided a national and central focus on research and data around children since the publication of the National Children's Strategy in 2000. This programme has included a commissioned research programme, a capacity-building programme, infrastructural development and active dissemination of research and data around children's lives. In addition, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and The Atlantic Philanthropies have jointly funded the creation of an evidence base around early intervention in children's lives.

Despite these developments, some gaps in our understandings of children's lives remain. The present strategy builds on previous initiatives and will help to ensure that future progress in the continued development of our knowledge on children's lives will take account of both research and data through the implementation of a systematic, harmonised and coordinated approach.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DATA ON CHILDREN'S LIVES

A consultative and partnership approach was adopted at every stage in the development of this strategy, from the compilation of the evidence to the identification of priorities and agreement on actions to be taken. Development was overseen by a cross-departmental, multi-sectoral Steering Group, chaired by the Director General of the former Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs). The Steering Group included representatives from the Departments of Education and Skills, Social Protection, Health, Justice and Equality, the Central Statistics Office and the Health Service Executive, as well as experts from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the National University of Ireland, Galway (see *Appendix 9*).

As noted earlier, at the outset of this policy-making process, it was intended to focus on developing a data strategy similar to those developed by other Government departments. It became apparent, however, that a more comprehensive approach, which would also take account of research, was required and for that reason, a decision was taken that both research and data would be considered in this development. However, this presented a number of challenges, including:

- the need to take account of the breadth of children's lives, including physical and mental health, active learning, safety, economic security, being part of positive networks and actively participating in society;
- the absence of a central repository of research and data that could be examined for the presence or absence of information on specific areas of children's lives;
- a multiplicity of research and data funders, providers, analysts, publishers and users;
- a lack of consensus on the prioritisation of research and data gaps to be addressed.

An examination of other data strategies from Ireland and from other countries highlighted the extensive nature of the proposed development. In fact, only one research and data strategy was identified that took account of both elements and focused on the breadth of children's lives (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005). In addition, an examination of the literature showed that a consensus on the best practice to develop a strategic approach to both research and data has not been agreed. Some consideration, however, has been given to one aspect, namely, the identification of priorities for research, with approaches adopted including the use of a Delphi study (McKenna *et al*, 2010; Hanafin and Brooks, 2005); bibliographic measurement and qualitative assessments (Grupp *et al*, 2009); a conceptualised approach based on the burden of the problem and the answerability of the questions (Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative, 2008); systematic searching and analysis of topic and type of research (Stevens *et al*, 2007); the identification of common themes that emerge in the work of those involved in the area (Courtney, 2000); and an examination of the extent to which research is available in respect of specific topics (Share and Kerrins, 2009). A checklist on priority setting for health research was published in December 2010 by the World Health Organization (Viergever *et al*, 2010). This checklist identified 9 common themes of good practice in this area, namely: context, comprehensiveness, inclusiveness, information gathering, planning for implementation, criteria, deciding on priorities, evaluation and transparency.

While much of the preparatory work for the development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives had already taken place by 2010, these criteria have generally been taken into account. In addition, the strategy was informed by national policy imperatives, theoretical developments around children's lives and other guidance, and a wide range of inputs outlined below. The guidance for the strategy included the National Statistics Board's (2004) *Best Practice Guidelines* for developing a data strategy, which have as a central component appropriate oversight of the development of a data strategy (see *Appendix 8*).

The strategy's development was also informed by theoretical understandings of childhood, as well as policy and practice around children's lives. Theoretical understandings drew on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) and Lerner (1998), among others. This facilitated a focus on the interlinked contexts, dimensions and relationships that influence childhood, while making explicit the proximal and distal formal and informal supports needed by children to reach their full potential. These understandings also explicitly

recognise that children and young people influence (as well as being influenced by) the context within which they are situated. Within this understanding, a life course perspective is particularly helpful since it acknowledges the pathways taken in life, the impact of external influences and the agency of individuals in one's own life. Key concepts associated with this approach include pathways, transitions, turning points, cultural and contextual influences, timing in children's lives, linked lives and adaptive strategies (Wethington, 2005).

CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES

Previous strategic development around children's lives in Ireland has also been theoretically informed and the publication of the **National Children's Strategy** in 2000 by the Department of Health and Children presented an operationalisation of key theoretical concepts in the 'whole child' perspective. This perspective drew attention to the active developing child, children's agency, formal and informal supports, and the relationships around children's lives. In addition, 9 dimensions of children's development were presented. These were considered as 'expressions of a set of relatively discrete, but interrelated areas' around which children achieve outcomes at different stages of development. The dimensions were identified as physical and mental well-being, intellectual capacity, emotional and behavioural well-being, family relationships, self-care, social and peer relationships, social presentation, spiritual and moral well-being, and identity.

A focus on children's outcomes in children's policy has continued since then and an explication and articulation of national children's service outcomes took place in **The Agenda for Children's Services**, published by the Office of the Minister for Children in 2007. This policy handbook names 7 national children's service outcomes to be achieved, i.e. that children will be healthy, both physically and mentally; supported in active learning; safe from accidental and intentional harm; economically secure; secure in the immediate and wider physical environment; part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community; and included and participating in society. The outcomes are framed as active, strengths-based and positive. There is much overlap between these 7 outcomes in *The Agenda* and the 9 dimensions of children's development as outlined in the National Children's Strategy. Since children's outcomes have been positioned within policy and peer-reviewed literature as critical to our understandings of children's lives, a focus on this area was consequently incorporated into the present strategy.

The articulation of outcomes in *The Agenda* provides the most recent consideration of this area in Irish national policy and for that reason these were applied, with two adjustments, in the development of the present strategy. These adjustments were as follows:

- First, in the process of identifying research and data gaps, needs and priorities, considerable overlap was identified between the outcome area '*security in the immediate and wider physical environment*' and '*being safe from accidental and intentional harm*'. For that reason, those two outcome areas were amalgamated into a single area entitled 'safety'.
- Second, overlap was found between the concept and operationalisation of '*being part of positive networks*' and of '*being included and participating in society*'. Again, for the purpose of the present strategy, these were merged into a single outcome area.

Thus, the 5 outcome areas of children's lives found to be the best fit for this research and data strategy are that children will be:

- healthy, both physically and mentally;
- supported in active learning;
- safe from accidental and intentional harm, and secure in the immediate and wider physical environment;
- economically secure;
- part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and community, and included and participating in society.

Across each outcome area, common issues were considered relating to demographic and other parental and family characteristics, key transitions through the lifecycle and at points of interaction with services and supports, as well as trajectories and turning points. This enabled a holistic approach to be taken in the development of this strategy.

In summary, the present strategy was steered by three core areas, namely: key elements contained in guidelines for strategic development in this area, theoretical understandings of children's lives and policy imperatives. While different elements were employed at different times, their combination facilitated a holistic and comprehensive approach to identifying research and data gaps around children's lives and, furthermore, enabled the identification of actions to meet them.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1 presents an overview of the overall process of development which, as illustrated, took place in a multi-faceted and iterative process, informed by:

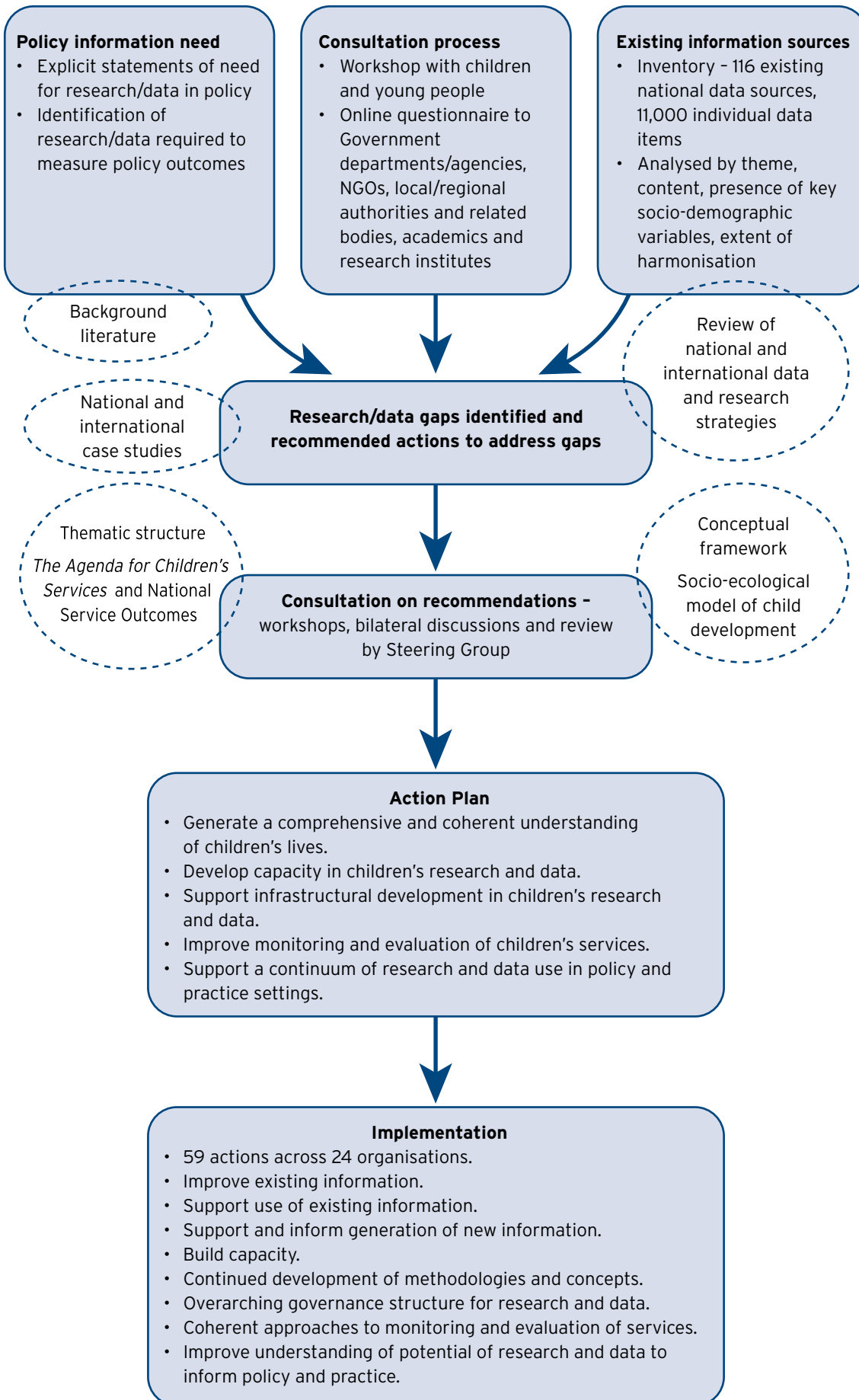
- **A literature review**, which identified key issues for consideration in the development of a data strategy (Gavin *et al*, 2011). These issues included challenges in managing data systems (e.g. documentation, data quality); data integration (data repositories, unique identifiers, legal issues); data protection issues, including international examples; ethical issues; and examples of data strategies elsewhere. Similar issues also emerged in the findings from the consultation process, as outlined in Chapter 4.
- **Cross-national case studies**, which reported on the HELP project, Canada; ContactPoint, UK; Personal Health Record, Ireland; SOTKANet, Finland; and Statistics Sweden (Clerkin *et al*, 2011).
- **A review of existing research and data strategies**, nationally and internationally, which was undertaken to identify key issues arising.

The first two of these reports were provided to the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) in 2008 (published online at www.dcy.a.ie) and the third was produced by OMCYA research staff in 2008-2009. These documents provided background information on potential challenges and mechanisms for improving data around children's lives.

The following approach to the process of development of the strategy then took place, each stage of which is described in detail below:

- **the identification of gaps**, or perceived gaps, in knowledge about children's lives;
- **an analytical process** that mapped the gaps identified against information known to be available, resulting in the development of a first draft of recommended actions;
- **an iterative consultative process** that took account of gaps and identification of mechanisms through which these could be met;
- **a series of bilateral discussions** with stakeholders for the purpose of reaching agreement about actions to be undertaken and implementation processes.

Figure 1: Data strategy development process



○ primary inputs ○ background information

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL GAPS

This involved the systematic collection of information from a number of different sources. The main inputs to this process were (1) a review of recommendations in national policy (2000-2008) and (2) a consultation process. These inputs were then analysed to identify potential data gaps.

Review of recommendations in national policy

A detailed review of policy documents with potential relevance to the development of a research and data strategy around children's lives was completed at the end of 2008, taking account of national policy documents published during 2000-2008. A total of 1,887 relevant individual recommendations from 49 policy documents published over this period were identified in the course of this review (see *Appendix 3*). Individual recommendations concerned with research and data on children's lives were categorised by theme, type of action and life course stage. About one-quarter of the recommendations were categorised as being principally concerned with 'research' and 'data', with the others more focused on such issues as service provision, training and programme implementation. The identification of data needs arising from the provision of services was critically important to ensuring that the information required to improve monitoring and evaluation of services could be matched by appropriate actions in this area.

A small number of policy documents have been published since 2008, including, for example, the current programme for Government (Department of the Taoiseach, 2011) and a strategy for literacy and numeracy for children and young people (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). It was not possible to include the recommendations emerging from these in the systematic process that took place to identify gaps arising due to the timeline involved. However, in general, research and data requirements in recent policy and service initiatives have been taken into account in the present strategy and its Action Plan (see *Chapter 5*) by means of continuing consultation with key policy and practice personnel throughout its development.

Consultations

There were two strands to the consultation process. First, in order to ensure the voice of children was heard in the development of the strategy, a consultation workshop was conducted with the OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum (CYPF) in 2008. Secondly, in March and April 2009, a structured consultation on research and data needs and availability was conducted through the medium of an online questionnaire, which was publicly available and also notified to a targeted mailing list of some 1,000 organisations. The questionnaire used in the consultation (see *Appendix 4*) was designed to capture the views of both users and producers of research and data on children's lives and addressed the following issues:

- priority topics for the next 10 years;
- current use and production of data on children's lives;
- issues of data quality, availability and access;
- dissemination policies and strategies;
- planned developments in data on children's lives.

Overall, 196 responses were received to the questionnaire and these ranged across a broad spectrum of interests and sectors, including service providers, academics/researchers, Government and non-governmental organisations (see *Appendix 5*). A detailed report of the findings from both consultations is published online at www.dcyia.ie (DCYA, 2011).

Analysis of inputs

Analysis of the policy recommendations and the responses to the consultation process was carried out in three stages:

- Policy recommendations designated 'research' and 'data' were examined and the related needs of each documented. These were separated into two lists, one relating to content and the other to research and data processes.

- Other policy recommendations were examined to identify any additional research or data needs arising, and these supplemented the lists mentioned above.
- The consultation responses were examined to identify any further research or data needs arising that had not previously been identified in the review of policy. The listings of research and data needs were further developed from this input, in particular in relation to data processes.

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION GAPS AND AVAILABILITY

The information needs identified through the analysis of policy and the consultation responses (*see above*) were then mapped against data known to exist on children's lives. These data were identified through the compilation of an inventory of data sources, comprising variables from both administrative and survey-based datasets. Data sources were selected for inclusion on the basis of the following criteria:

- they contained data relating to children and their families, or services and supports for children and families;
- they were expected to be updated on an ongoing or regular basis.

Data sources currently being developed and once-off data sources were excluded from the inventory. A total of 116 data sources were included in the inventory, giving rise to approximately 11,000 individual variables. The full list of these data sources is provided in Appendix 6.

The inventory of data sources was then searched systematically to identify items that could meet each articulated research or data need. In some cases, there was clearly no deficit in information and therefore no action was proposed. Where information existed but did not appear to be well known or understood, a proposed action around dissemination or raising awareness was drafted. In other cases where there was a substantive deficit in data, recommended actions to meet this need were proposed. An extension or development of an existing source was the first form of action considered in all cases and only in situations where this was not possible were new data considered.

This process gave rise to about 900 potential actions being drafted for development and improvement of information on children's lives. These potential actions were then subjected to review through a consultation process (*see below*).

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ACTIONS

The consultation process on draft actions had three aims:

- to identify actions that may have already been addressed or partially addressed in current initiatives. This was particularly important in the area of research since there was no research equivalent for the data sources inventory to inform the analysis of information gaps;
- to clarify which of the actions identified were current priorities for policy and practice;
- to establish whether there were new emerging areas that had not yet been identified.

The first phase of this consultation was in the form of two expert workshops, focused on health and education respectively. These comprised experts in the two sectors drawn from key policy, service and research communities. Participants were asked to identify the actions considered to be priorities prior to coming to the workshops. The results were then analysed and used to guide discussions during the workshops. The second phase of the consultation comprised a series of bilateral consultations with subject matter experts, again drawn from the policy, service and research communities. Some of these involved face-to-face meetings and some were conducted by correspondence. Again, the feedback received was systematically recorded and compared to the initial set of actions. A revised and reduced set of prioritised actions was developed as a result of this feedback and organisations with scope to undertake these actions were identified.

BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The final phase in this development process was to reach agreement on individual actions for inclusion in the strategy's Action Plan. This involved a series of iterations with more than 30 statutory organisations identified as being central to the actions proposed. These iterations involved the identification of mechanisms through which individual actions could be embedded within existing initiatives and also an examination of options for progressing actions that required new developments. This was relatively straightforward for some organisations, while for others, consultation and negotiation took place over a considerable period of time. In a small number of cases, it was not possible to reach agreement in time for inclusion in the present strategy and, consequently, further iterations will take place on these issues, which include parenting supports, teenage parents, domestic violence, children in families with illness or disability, asylum-seeking children and topics relating to culture and integration.

However, in general, substantial support for this development has been achieved and this is evident in the Action Plan provided in Chapter 5, which consists of 59 actions to be implemented across 24 organisations.

SUMMARY

A comprehensive approach was taken to the development of an evidence base to support this research and data strategy. Theoretical and policy understandings underpinned the approach used and practical guidance was provided through the National Statistics Board's (2004) *Best Practice Guidelines* on the development of a data strategy. A literature review and case studies of good practice in the area also informed the process.

A systematic gap analysis was undertaken to identify key gaps in research and data on specific areas of children's lives and these were framed around the outcome areas of children's health, active learning, safety, economic security and their participation. Within each outcome area, a number of topics were identified and these were prioritised on the basis of the discussions with key stakeholders, who included researchers, policy-makers and service providers. The main areas, along with the priorities identified, are presented in Chapter 3. In addition to the content areas identified in the process of the gap analysis, a number of issues were raised in respect of data processes and these are also described in the following chapter.

3. INFORMATION GAPS, SOURCES AND PRIORITIES

This chapter presents the findings from the preparatory work undertaken in the development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives. The research and data gaps identified in the process are framed around children's outcomes and this facilitates a focus on different aspects of their lives, as well as recognising the interlinkages between them. Across each outcome area, common issues are considered relating to demographic, parental and family characteristics, key transitions through the lifecycle and at points of interaction with services and supports, as well as trajectories and turning points. In addition to the identification of the main research and data gaps, key data and research sources are identified for each of the 5 outcome areas (including relevant areas of the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*, and certain central developments). Finally, a list of research priorities agreed with key stakeholders is set out. A more extensive and detailed list of actions, with timelines, implementation mechanisms and progress indicators, is presented in the Action Plan (see Chapter 5).

The National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland is a national resource through which many of the gaps identified can be met, particularly those relating to pathways and transitions in children's lives. While the investment in this long-term study will only come to fruition in later data sweeps, there is already a wealth of information available and accessible. For that reason, information from the National Longitudinal Study on areas of relevance to individual outcome areas is highlighted below. Mechanisms through which data from the National Longitudinal Study can meet gaps identified in the present strategy will be further explored in a Knowledge Transfer Strategy, which is currently in preparation.

OUTCOME AREA 1: CHILDREN WILL BE HEALTHY, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY

This outcome area refers to growth and development, as well as physical and mental health across the lifecycle – from prenatal, through infancy, early and middle childhood, and adolescence. Mortality, morbidity and disability are given consideration here, along with issues of relevance to access, availability, utilisation and evaluation of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services.

Key data sources

A number of important sources of information are available in respect of children's health. Of particular importance in this regard is the Health Behaviour In School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey, which is commissioned by the Department of Health and has been undertaken by the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway, since 1998. This provides the most broad-based survey data available nationally on children's health and, being part of an international initiative, allows for comparisons between children in Ireland and elsewhere. In terms of administrative data, the National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS) and the CSO's *Vital Statistics* publications provide key information relating to birth rates and the perinatal period, while the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) gives a profile of interactions with the hospital system, including reasons for admission and duration of stay. Other systems hold data for the purpose of surveillance of specific diseases and conditions, obesity and treatment for drug use, and there are also systems for monitoring interactions with mental health and disability services. The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study has collected data on the health status, behaviours and use of health services among Irish Travellers and includes special modules on Traveller children, as well as a follow-up one-year Birth Cohort Study.

Research and data priorities

A number of data gaps were found in terms of children's health and the following areas were identified as priorities for developments in research and data. The need to track children's health status over time was a clear priority and the proposal to examine the feasibility of the development of the Personal Health Record as a national system provides a potential mechanism through which this can be achieved. The evaluation of health services in terms

of their capacity to meet children's needs, both in terms of direct health outcomes and the broader impact on their lives, was also seen as an essential area for development. In addition, the ability to disaggregate data by key population groups was seen as a priority. Specific topics for further investigation include:

- reporting on health status, health promotion initiatives and health surveillance mechanisms for children and young people;
- mental and emotional health status of children and young people, and the impact on their lives;
- children's behaviours around nutrition and physical activity, the impact on their physical growth and development, and the services and structures to support them;
- sexual health and related behaviours.

Table 1: Areas relevant to the outcome of children's health included in the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*

INFANT COHORT (at 9 months)	CHILD COHORT (at 9 years)
Infant health	Child health
Antenatal care (including antenatal care provider, scans and pregnancy complications)	Birth outcomes (including labour, gestation, mode of delivery, birth weight and birth complications)
Birth outcomes (including labour, gestation, mode of delivery, birth weight and birth complications)	Breastfeeding in infancy, child diet (including typical food consumption and special dietary requirements)
Feeding (including breastfeeding)	Physical activity (including exercise and sport)
Vaccinations	Dental health and hygiene
Current health and chronic health conditions (including sight, hearing, speech and/or mobility difficulties)	Current health and chronic health conditions (including sight, hearing, speech and/or mobility difficulties)
Healthcare utilisation (including barriers to healthcare utilisation, medical card cover and private health insurance)	Healthcare utilisation (including barriers to healthcare utilisation, medical card cover and private health insurance)
Sleeping and crying patterns (including hours of sleep, sleeping times, sleeping position and location, sleeping difficulties and night-time feeding)	Weight and height (including perception of weight status, dieting and direct BMI measures)
Infant development (including gross and fine motor development)	Emotional health and well-being (including temperament, strengths and difficulties, and stressful life events)
PARENTAL HEALTH (both cohorts)	
Current health and chronic health conditions	
Health behaviour (including smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use)	
Weight and height (including self-reported, dieting and direct BMI measures)	
Prenatal behaviour and related issues (including smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use during pregnancy, stress during pregnancy, fertility treatment, age of first pregnancy and future pregnancy intentions)	
Mental health (including depression and anxiety)	

OUTCOME AREA 2: CHILDREN WILL BE SUPPORTED IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Cognitive development, educational commitment, participation, attainment and achievement are all taken into account under this outcome area. It also includes areas of relevance to educational services provided in early child care, primary and secondary, and out-of-school settings. Outcomes, supports and services for children with additional learning needs are also considered under this outcome area.

Key data sources

Many of the principal information sources on children's learning arise from administrative datasets, such as the Early Child Care and Education Database of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs; the Annual Census of Primary Schools conducted by the Department of Education and Skills; the National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading conducted by the Education Research Centre with primary school students on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills; and, at second level, the Post-Primary Pupil Database. These data sources give a range of information on the pre-school and school-going population, including education participation levels for different age groups, educational attainment (at primary level) and uptake of different subjects and modes of study. These are complemented by other data sources, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Survey, which measures educational outcomes for 15-year-olds across a range of competencies, and the examination results' data available from the State Examinations Commission, while data holdings in the higher and further education sector allow for tracking of outcomes beyond the age of 18. There are also some data available on groups with specific needs, such as the surveys of DEIS schools and the monitoring of problematic attendance patterns at both primary and secondary level by the data holdings of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

Research and data priorities

A substantial deficit, identified previously in the *Data Strategy* of the Department of Education and Science (2008), exists in data systems on children's learning pathways and outcomes due to the lack of an integrated learner database. This integration can only be achieved through the development of a primary pupil database to complement and link with similar data holdings at pre-school, post-primary and higher and further education. Topics identified as key deficits in our knowledge of children's learning outcomes included:

- factors affecting attendance, retention/progression and early school leaving;
- long-term impacts of early learning experiences;
- learning pathways and outcomes in non-traditional or out-of-school settings;
- the impact of arts, cultural and sporting activity on learning;
- services and supports for general education attainment, in particular for those children with a learning or intellectual disability;
- behavioural issues, both pro- and anti-social, in educational settings;
- measures of literacy and numeracy at key stages and by key characteristics.

Table 2: Areas relevant to the outcome of active learning included in the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*

INFANT COHORT (at 9 months)	CHILD COHORT (at 9 years)
Cognitive development	Early childhood care and education (including type, quality, cost, choice, satisfaction, proximity, number of hours and future intentions)
Early childhood care and education (including type, quality, cost, choice, satisfaction, proximity, number of hours and future intentions)	Parental education attainment (including highest level of education attainment, English and numeracy competence)
Parental education attainment (including highest level of education attainment, English and numeracy competence)	Languages spoken in the home
Languages spoken in the home	Child's learning difficulties (including supports required)
	Child's school attendance and absenteeism (parent and teacher report)
	Child's academic performance in Maths and English
	Child's access to educational resources in the home (including books and a computer)
	Parental involvement in schooling and educational aspirations for the child (including attendance at parent/teacher meetings and homework assistance)
	Child's attitude to school and teachers
	Principal report on school characteristics and resources attended by the child (including size and quality of school, number of teaching and other staff, school ethos and extra-curricular activities, facilities and resources, discipline and bullying policies)
	Child's teacher characteristics and training (including teacher background, in-service training, class size and composition, class management and teaching style)
	Teacher's perception of child and parent (including background, school readiness, school engagement of child and parent, attendance and absenteeism, and academic performance) and school (including school environment and job stress)

OUTCOME AREA 3: CHILDREN WILL BE SAFE FROM ACCIDENTAL AND INTENTIONAL HARM, AND SECURE IN THE IMMEDIATE AND WIDER PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Children's safety in the home, community and broader environment, along with other settings, are considered here, including non-accidental harm (including, for example, child abuse, self-harm and environmental hazards such as pollution) and accidental harm. Risk behaviours, such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, by children, parents and others in their broader environment are taken into account and crimes committed by, and against, young people are reflected under this outcome area. Preventive, protective and remedial services are also considered, with a particular focus on describing, documenting, identifying and evaluating interventions.

Key data sources

The principal data holdings identified around children's safety include the Child Care Interim Data Set of the HSE, which records notifications relating to child protection concerns made to the HSE, outcomes of referrals and services provided. This system, which involves the reporting of aggregate data at Local Health Office level, is to be replaced in the future by the National Child Care Information System, currently in development. The Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) and the National Registry of Deliberate Self-Harm provide data on accidental and non-accidental injuries (including self-inflicted harm) among children and young people according to an international health classification (ICD-10). In addition, many other data sources contain variables of relevance to this topic. The European Schools Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) gives highly detailed information on children's exposure, attitudes and behaviours in relation to alcohol and drugs. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey contains items on road safety and on children's perceptions of the area in which they live and the people in it. There is detailed information on housing quality collected in the National House Condition Survey, while the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government conducts a triennial assessment of housing need, which includes details on families with children in need of social housing. The Department of Justice and Equality holds data on children seeking asylum, including those who are separated from their families; the Garda Síochána Juvenile Diversion Programme holds data on children who have committed offences; and the PULSE system contains data on child victims of crime.

Research and data priorities

Of the data gaps identified in terms of children's safety, the following areas were identified as being priorities for developments:

- rates of occurrence of accidental injury and factors influencing these events;
- children's pathways through child protection and alternative care services, the nature of children and family interactions with the child protection system and resultant outcomes, and the immediate and longer term impact of child protection services on families and children taking account of their well-being and well-becoming;
- the suitability of the built environment in which children live, attend school and receive other services, including the availability of safe open spaces;
- the type and quality of children's interactions with the criminal justice system and pathways through the system for those who have committed offences;
- access to and quality and cost of services for children and young people.

Table 3: Areas relevant to the outcome of children's safety and security included in the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*

INFANT COHORT (at 9 months)	CHILD COHORT (at 9 years)
Local environment (quality, safety and services)	Local environment (quality, safety and services)
Parental risk behaviours	Parental risk behaviours
Involvement with child protection and alternative care services and supports	Involvement with child protection and alternative care services and supports
Accidents and injuries (including hospitalisations)	Accidents and injuries (including hospitalisations)

OUTCOME AREA 4: CHILDREN WILL BE ECONOMICALLY SECURE

This outcome area takes account of family income, of relative, consistent and persistent poverty, and of the distribution of income within the household. The impact of social welfare dependence on children's lives, along with effects of youth and adult unemployment, are considered. Public expenditure at local, regional and national level on services and supports available to children, their families and local communities are also reflected in this outcome area.

Key data sources

There is much detailed information on the financial situation of families and households with children. The main source of data on income, living conditions, poverty and deprivation is the European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which provides the data from which official measures of poverty and deprivation are generated, as well as measures of income levels for the entire population, and provides measures of income and poverty for households with children. The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) and the Census of Population gather data on employment status of persons and households with children, while at the more subjective level, the HBSC and ESPAD surveys provide data on children's perceptions of their families' economic circumstances. The Department of Social Protection holds data on recipients of benefits, including details of those with dependent children.

Research and data priorities

Although there is significant data available on income and living conditions in Ireland, and the data allow for international comparisons in many cases, there were deficits identified in relation to our knowledge of the impact of economic circumstances on children's lives. In particular, the focus on households, rather than individuals, in income and poverty statistics makes it more difficult to assess the impact of differing income levels and availability of resources on children. The issue of deprivation also tends to be examined at the household level, although a recent EU-SILC module (field work conducted in 2009) has undertaken an examination of child-specific deprivation items and findings on this initial work are expected later in 2011. Consequently, the following areas have been identified as requiring further investigation:

- child-specific measures of income, poverty and deprivation;
- the family situation in which children live (including employment status of their parents/carers) and the impact this has on their outcomes;
- how the effects of low income on children's lives can be mediated by formal and informal supports and services;
- supports and services for families and the impact they have on children's economic circumstances and related outcomes;
- social inclusion issues for children living with poverty or deprivation.

Table 4: Areas relevant to the outcome of economic security included in the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*

INFANT COHORT (at 9 months)	CHILD COHORT (at 9 years)
Economic status (including family income, family social class, social welfare payments and indicators of family deprivation)	Economic status (including family income, family social class, social welfare payments and indicators of family deprivation)
Housing (including nature and tenure of accommodation, housing quality and number of bedrooms)	Housing (including nature and tenure of accommodation, housing quality and number of bedrooms)
Employment status (including working conditions and work-life balance)	Employment status (including working conditions and work-life balance)

OUTCOME AREA 5: CHILDREN WILL BE PART OF POSITIVE NETWORKS OF FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS AND THE COMMUNITY, AND INCLUDED AND PARTICIPATING IN SOCIETY

Children's capacity to develop good outcomes across many different areas is more likely where they experience stable family life, where they have a sense of belonging and where changes of carer are kept to a minimum (Department of Health and Children, 2000). This aspect of children's lives is considered in this outcome area and issues of relevance to family relationships are included. Children's capacity to make friends, develop relationships and understand the impact of their actions, appearance and behaviour on others (including their broader communities) are also considered here. Being involved and included in society takes account of activities children and young people might be involved in, such as sporting or cultural activities. It also takes account of the contribution children and young people can make through volunteering and recognises the importance of ensuring they have a voice in matters that affect them.

Key data sources

The HBSC and ESPAD surveys collect a range of data on this topic, including information on the quality of family relationships and friendships experienced by children and young people. The HBSC survey also collects data on children's perceptions of their communities, the amenities within them and their relationships with neighbours. Data from the Census of Population give insights into the lives of minority groups and those who are geographically isolated. Education surveys, such as PISA, contain some information on children's participation in extra-curricular activities and on decision-making structures in school settings. Data holdings of the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme contain information on children who are participating in a restorative justice process, having accepted responsibility for previous anti-social behaviour. The recently conducted International Civic and Citizenship Education Study provides information on the social attitudes of young people and their knowledge of social and civic issues and structures.

Research and data priorities

The following areas have been identified as requiring further investigation to better inform us about the diversity of children's networks, supports and participation in their communities and wider society:

- children's living situations, quality of life, rights and influences;
- pathways for children living in alternative care and the outcomes for those with differing experiences of this system;
- the different types of social participation engaged in by children and young people (e.g. cultural, sporting, social/voluntary/political structures, ICT and media) and the impact of such participation;

- services to support children's social participation, the impact of these services on their lives and the extent to which they are available to different groups of children;
- issues relating to pro-social and anti-social behaviour and the youth justice system.

Table 5: Areas relevant to the outcome of children's participation included in the National Longitudinal Study of Children, *Growing up in Ireland*

INFANT COHORT (at 9 months)	CHILD COHORT (at 9 years)
Attachment (including separation anxiety and parental attachment) Family structure	Family structure Parental marital status and parental relationships (including the quality of the marital relationship, non-resident parenting, custody arrangements, maintenance payments, contact and relationship with the non-resident parent)
Parental marital status and parental relationships (including the quality of the marital relationship, non-resident parenting, custody arrangements, maintenance payments, contact and relationship with the non-resident parent)	Sibling status and sibling relationships (including number of siblings, quality of the relationships)
Sibling status and sibling relationships (including number of siblings, quality of the relationships) Parent-child relationship	Parent-child relationship (including discipline, family activities, discussing problems) Other significant relationships (including grandparents and extended family)
Other significant relationships (including grandparents and extended family) Parental support Parental self-efficacy Religiosity and spirituality	Peer relationships (including friendship networks and bullying) Parental self-efficacy Religiosity and spirituality Ethnicity, citizenship and country of birth
Ethnicity, citizenship and country of birth Involvement in local community	Involvement in local community Child's participation in family life (including family decision-making, household chores and self-care) Child's participation in hobbies, activities (structured and unstructured), sport and exercise Child's mobile phone and computer ownership (including home computer use) Children's participation in pro-social and anti-social behaviour

4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES INFLUENCING NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DATA ON CHILDREN'S LIVES

In addition to research and data gaps relating to specific outcomes in children's lives, the approach taken in the development of this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives allowed for the identification of cross-cutting issues regarding research and data processes. Four key areas were identified and each is described below:

- development of a national strategic approach to improving information around children's lives;
- improvement of administrative data systems;
- building capacity across all areas of research and data development, particularly analytic capability;
- supporting evidence-informed policy and practice.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL STRATEGIC APPROACH TO IMPROVING INFORMATION AROUND CHILDREN'S LIVES

There was a clear articulation of the need for a national strategic approach to improving information around children's lives. Three main areas emerged:

- **To build on current initiatives for the coordination of key elements of research and data on children's lives.** Such an approach would facilitate the identification of priority gaps to be filled in a timely manner and would assure the relevance to existing needs of any new initiatives. It would also have the advantage of ensuring duplication of effort is significantly reduced, while facilitating a coordinated approach to filling gaps in our knowledge.
- **A harmonised approach to national guidance on governance of research and data production and use.** This would include strategic approaches to development and implementation of national standards and guidance on issues such as ethics, data protection, good practice in commissioning research and access to publicly funded research.
- **A more coherent approach to information about services available for children and young people.** This was an issue of particular concern for children and young people and they identified the importance of being able to access information about supports and services through a coordinated approach by a reliable trusted organisation in a manner which meets their needs.

As identified in Chapter 1, there are a range of existing initiatives which could contribute to such a national approach to research and statistics. Looking elsewhere for guidance, it can be seen that a formal structured approach to this issue has been adopted in the UK through the development and publication of a research governance framework in the health and social care environment (Department of Health [UK], 2005). The main areas addressed in this governance framework are guidance on ethics, science, information, health, safety, employment, finance and intellectual property rights.

In addition to supporting broader developments on research practice, governance and integrity, there are a small number of issues arising where the involvement of children raises additional challenges, such as with research ethics. Actions to address these have been developed and are presented within the Action Plan for this strategy (see Chapter 5).

The situation in respect of statistical guidance is more coordinated and there is considerable harmonisation across the data quality frameworks published by different national and international statistical organisations. The European Statistical System has provided strong leadership in this area and has published, under the auspices of Eurostat (2003 and 2005), a number of documents in support of the European Statistics Code of Practice. Organisations such as the Office for National Statistics in the UK and the Central Statistics Office in Ireland have adopted much of their guidance. The Central Statistics Office (CSO), for example, has now developed and published a number of methodological documents that provide users with substantial information on which judgements of the quality of the resulting survey output can be made. They have also published a very clear protocol on data linkage, which will be of significant assistance in future developments (CSO, 2005).

In addition to this type of guidance, some work needs to take place on the harmonisation of variables being used to collect data on children's lives due to, for example, the absence of agreed definitions in respect of a number of administrative datasets. A lack of compatibility in the collection of data results in difficulties around the reliability and comparability of data on children and this can be seen to be particularly acute where a wide variety of data collection tools are used to measure the same phenomenon. The *Data Strategy* by the Department of Education and Science (2008) commenced work in this area and has identified a number of core variables for use in the education setting. Actions in the present strategy will build on this and other similar developments so that a more standardised and harmonised approach to data on children's lives can be put in place.

In relation to services for children and young people, they themselves have indicated that they need a mechanism through which information about local services can be provided in a way that is reliable, unbiased and timely. Considerable work in this area has already taken place and this is being led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, through the Citizen Participation Team. There is a national commitment to the implementation of Goal 1 of the National Children's Strategy, which states that '*Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity*' (Department of Health and Children, 2000).

In the past 8 years, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) has worked to ensure the establishment or consolidation of the following key structures:

- Comhairle na nÓg (network of local youth councils);
- Dáil na nÓg (national youth parliament);
- the Inclusion Programme to support the involvement of seldom-heard children in decision-making;
- the Children and Young People's Participation Support Team;
- student councils;
- the DCYA's Children and Young People's Forum;
- consultations and dialogues with children and young people.

In addition to these structures, the DCYA provides opportunities for children and young people to contribute their views on issues of national and personal importance, and has conducted consultations and dialogues with children and young people on a range of issues, including mental health, citizenship and the development of policies (e.g. National Recreation Policy for Young People) and strategies, including this one. A more complete list is provided in Appendix 7.

Other initiatives have also taken place, including mechanisms to include the information needs of children and young people. A recent report by Doyle *et al* (2010) identified areas arising from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey around which children and young people want to have more information. The topics of most interest to them have been compiled in a reference document for those working in health practice and policy. Alcohol was the highest ranked HBSC topic, followed by (in order of ranking) puberty, drugs, drunkenness, smoking, fighting, general health, body image, physical and emotional health, happiness and friendships.

Other mechanisms can also be used to inform research and data being collected. The *Growing Up in Ireland* study, for example, is informed by a Children's Advisory Forum (CAF), which was set up to make sure that the voices of children are heard within the study. The forum is made up of 84 children who form 12 committees in schools across Ireland. Such approaches can provide important mechanisms through which children and young people can have a say in the type of information they want to know about. Again, there is a need for a more coordinated and structured approach to making this type of information available to children and young people, and actions concerned with this are included in the strategy's Action Plan (see Chapter 5).

IMPROVEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SYSTEMS

Improving data systems is a core feature of a number of national and international data strategies and, not surprisingly, it has also been identified as an area of particular importance to the present strategy. Many of the current gaps in our knowledge could potentially be met through administrative data sources, especially if it were possible to link these resources with each other. A number of key elements relating to the development of data systems – including ensuring a focus on the collection of child-centred data, the use of a unique identifier, the importance of geo-coding and the development of metadata and comparable measures – were all identified as being important in improving understandings of children's lives.

In addition to the need to improve the overall quality of data being collected and to undertake analysis at different levels, an inability to link systems has also been identified as a problem to be addressed. Many examples exist where data are unconnected or connected on an ad hoc basis only, thus failing to provide a comprehensive longitudinal view of pathways through systems. Better use could be made of administrative data resources to provide information about children's trajectories between and within services, as well as their outcomes. In addition, pathways for service providers (such as the movement of personnel, recruitment and retention, work placements and exiting services) could be determined from improved administrative data.

An approach to data collection, analysis and linkage at the level of the individual raises a number of challenges, particularly in terms of data quality, data integration, confidentiality and data protection. Central to any such process is that acceptable mechanisms be in place through which these issues can be addressed appropriately. Despite these challenges, however, the benefits of this type of approach are vast and would help to address the current lack of data for analysis in respect of some areas of children's lives.

A number of organisations have made significant investments and commitments in the area of data linkage. The Administrative Data Centre at the Central Statistics Office (CSO), for example, produces statistical results through linking datasets, including those held by other public authorities (see www.cso.ie/aboutus/admindatahold.htm). The CSO is in a unique position in this regard, in that the Statistics Act provides a statutory basis for their access to the data holdings of other public bodies and allows for access to and linkage of such holdings for statistical purposes only. Linked data files at the individual level cannot be accessed by the supplying organisation or other organisations.

Scope exists for data linkage within other agencies, however, within certain constraints. The Health Intelligence Unit of the Health Service Executive has developed *Health Atlas Ireland*, which is used to exploit the potential of integrating geographical information system technologies, health datasets (e.g. Census, HIPE, mortality) and statistical computations in a web-enabled and open source environment. *Health Atlas* provides role-based access to 'health mapping' across the sector in support of service planning, epidemiology, emergency responding and research (see www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/Population_Health/Health_Intelligence/).

Similar developments are also taking place within the university sector. The National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), for example, was established as a university institute at NUI Maynooth in 2001. It is a collaborative project between scholars from a number of social science disciplines and is located in four partner institutions. NIRSA undertakes fundamental, applied and comparative research on spatial processes and their effects on social and economic development in Ireland; their work draws on a number of administrative and other datasets.

The availability of these type of initiatives has the potential to support the maximisation of data systems already in place and this can assist in improving information about children's lives.

BUILD CAPACITY ACROSS ALL AREAS OF RESEARCH AND DATA DEVELOPMENT

In the development of the present strategy, the need was highlighted for the availability of competent personnel who are able to collect, analyse, report on, disseminate and use research and data. While difficulties were identified at every stage of the process, the problems were considered to be particularly acute in two areas: (1) knowledge about the availability and processes for access to existing data sources and (2) the capacity of personnel to carry out quantitative data analysis. These gaps were clearly linked to the possibilities of maximising the use of existing data and in that regard, attention was drawn to the data collected in the *Growing up in Ireland* study. In particular, it was noted that there were a limited number of organisations and individuals who could undertake more sophisticated analysis of data, which could be particularly helpful in:

- eliciting an understanding of causal or explanatory factors of a range of phenomena in children's lives;
- examining the impacts of circumstances and environments on children's outcomes;
- tracing pathways and transitions through different services;
- evaluation of services, supports and interventions, particularly in terms of access to, cost and quality of services.

While some of these issues can be uncovered using qualitative analytic mechanisms, the main areas of concern were related to quantitative approaches to improve understandings in these areas.

Condell and Begley (2007) note that while research capacity building is viewed as a key factor in development, the concept is '*broad, elusive or chameleon-like and theoretically homeless*'. Nevertheless, there has been a growing literature around this area in recent years and, notwithstanding these reservations, Trostle's (1992) definition of research capacity building still has some merit. He defines research capacity as '*a process of individual and institutional development which leads to higher levels of skills and greater ability to perform useful research*'.

There is some agreement in peer-reviewed and policy literature that capacity building needs to take place at every level of the organisation, from users of research to those who participate in, design, find funding for, conduct and publish research (Del Mar and Askew, 2004). These findings are also reflected in strategic approaches to research and data elsewhere, where workforce development and capacity building at every stage of the research and data cycle are identified as priorities for development.

In Ireland, substantial funding has been allocated to developing capacity in third-level education, particularly at PhD and post-doctoral level, through organisations such as the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET) the Health Research Board (HRB) and Science Foundation Ireland. The most recent HRB (2009) action plan identifies '*building capacity to conduct high-quality population health sciences research and health services research*' as a core priority, while Science Foundation Ireland's (2009) strategy focuses on developing human capital in research by building '*a critical mass of internationally competitive research teams*'. As with other investments, research around children's lives can also benefit from these programmes and actions agreed in this strategy will facilitate this.

SUPPORT EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY AND PRACTICE

Given the growing emphasis on the use of information to support evidence-informed policy and practice, it was not surprising that the need for developments in this area has emerged as a recurring theme. Many national and international research and data strategies make reference to the need to actively disseminate knowledge, although some provide more detailed approaches than others. The New Zealand Ministry of Health (2003) *Child Health Information Strategy*, for example, identifies the use of secure messaging and web-based information networks as a mechanism for child health data and also has as an objective '*to make it easy*

for health professionals to act on better additional child health information'. This type of approach has been widely recommended as one form of dissemination to serve the needs of users. In its *Community Social Data Strategy*, the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004) has identified the importance of dissemination and states that it intends to provide a gateway for organisations and municipalities to access data in order to identify and better understand the social and economic trends within their individual communities. The reports by the National Children and Youth Statistics Unit of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005a and 2005b) focus on the data providers and its data strategy provides a guide to producers of statistical information on how they can generate improvements to their own data holdings. Within the Irish context, the Department of Social and Family Affairs (2005), in its *Data and Statistics Strategy*, identifies one of its core objectives as meeting the information needs of the wider public, particularly in relation to schemes and social welfare services.

The use of evidence to support children's lives requires a collaborative effort across all stakeholders, including those concerned with the creation of knowledge and those whose primary concern is utilisation of knowledge. Related to this is the need to create linkages and exchange mechanisms, along with the establishment of intra- and inter-organisational forums that could help provide opportunities to share and debate different topics, create shared understandings and keep relevant personnel informed, both in respect of research and data needs arising and of developments taking place. This is an approach favoured within the literature: Gordon and Brown (2005), for example, note that partnerships and connections are required in order to:

- select and frame research questions to address matters of importance to relevant stakeholders;
- ensure the development of a research design that adheres to the highest standards of science;
- translate new knowledge into messages about the results that will be useful to those who are potential beneficiaries.

Many changes have taken place in Ireland in recent years to support the development of a shared understanding of children's lives and there has been a shift in culture, within the policy-making and service provider communities, towards the use of research and data to inform their work. These changes reflect an international movement that has facilitated the implementation of evidence-informed policy and practice, which has been defined as '*helping people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation*' (Nutley *et al*, 2007).

At Government level, there has been a very clear commitment to embedding an evidence-informed approach to policy-making within individual Government departments and this is explicit in a number of official publications (NESC, 2005 and 2009). In support of this, a number of Government departments now have statisticians on secondment from the CSO working within the organisation and this provides leadership and practical assistance in this area. In addition, a small number of Government departments and agencies have dedicated researchers and, again, this assists in supporting an evidence-informed approach to policy. More recently, there has been a move towards the creation of resources to assist organisations to make the best use of available evidence in respect of children's lives (CES, 2011). Despite these developments, a number of respondents identified organisational challenges that impeded the use of research and data, particularly those relating to culture. In their report for the Children Acts Advisory Board (CAAB), Buckley *et al* (2010) examined methods and mechanisms to support the creation of an organisational culture that is supportive of evidence utilisation. They identified the following actions:

- provide strong leadership;
- make evidence more accessible;
- assist personnel in understanding key messages;
- build capacity in reading, understanding and synthesising research;
- embed research within the organisation through creating incentives and rewarding research use;
- create linkages between research providers and users.

The development of organisational and institutional cultures that prioritise the production and utilisation of research and data within establishments concerned with children's lives has also been identified as a key component in building better research and data systems and resources. Embedding the use of research and data within processes and practices around children's lives is critical in supporting this type of development.

Improved dissemination techniques and practices, particularly the need for material to be available in a timely fashion and for the employment of multiple dissemination techniques, are vital to supporting increased use of research and data evidence to support policy and practice. The importance of knowledge transfer is recognised, particularly in the complexity of the policy-making process. This highlights the need to link data findings more closely to policy and service delivery with, for example, the development of short policy briefings tailored to the needs of particular communities. Some national initiatives already in existence which could support improved knowledge transfer include a database of policy-relevant research on children's lives hosted by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (see www.childrensdatabase.ie). Other organisations have also commenced similar approaches. The National Council for Special Education, for example, has developed a database of research relevant to their area of expertise (see www.ncse.ie/research/Database_of_SEN_Research_Policy_in_Ireland), as have the Family Support Agency (see www.fsa.ie/research/family-research-database/) and the Health Research Board's Alcohol and Drug Dissemination Unit (see www.hrb.ie), both of which also host databases on research relevant to their subject area. In the area of official statistics, the Central Statistics Office has made a substantial amount of information available in recent years on citizen's lives (including children) through their publications, statistical releases and central data dissemination service (see www.cso.ie/px/). Given the breadth of children's lives and the level of information available, it is clear that a coordinated effort across stakeholders to document and facilitate ease of access to material is required and this forms a central tenet of the present strategy.

A related issue emerging in this strategy is the availability, analysis and reporting on information about children's services at local level and the links between those services and children's outcomes. This type of data is considered essential to service planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, a first step in the development of better understandings of children's lives at local level is seen to be the availability of a common system for mapping. The *European Communities (Establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Policy Information in the European Community (INSPIRE)) Regulations 2010* (SI 382 of 2010), under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010), will be helpful in supporting developments in this area.

There is also a growing emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of policies, services and interventions. Much work has taken place in this regard, particularly in the health, education and youth affairs sectors (see, for example, Department of Education and Science, 2008; HIQA, 2011; HSE, 2010; Department of Health and Children, 2008). The implementation of a local-level approach was examined in some detail in the preparation of the present strategy through a case study on the Early Childhood Development Mapping project, which took place in British Columbia, Canada, and which directly links local services to school readiness (Hertzman *et al*, 2002). The purpose of this project is to create, advance and apply knowledge through interdisciplinary research to help children and families thrive and this is done by making available information about children's development and the services and supports around them at local level. In Ireland, South Dublin County Council has been working towards building a profile of services and supports for children in that area over the last number of years and, like the Canadian case study, they have used mapping as a mechanism through which this can be facilitated. At national level, the *State of the Nation's Children* report, published biennially since 2006 by the OMCYA, provides a mechanism through which a comprehensive set of indicators around children's lives can be used to report on their outcomes, availability of services and supports, and the relationships around them. These regular 2-yearly reports allow children's situations to be benchmarked, both nationally and internationally.

A more comprehensive approach to local-level services will be implemented over the course of the present strategy (2011-2016) and actions relating to this have been agreed. In addition, lessons learnt from the early intervention projects will also be used to take account of local-level issues when implementing new projects. Of particular relevance to this development is the work being undertaken by the CSO on geo-coding and data linkage.

In summary, it is clear that while much has been written about the use of research and data in policy and practice, the complexity of the processes involved have consequences for implementation. A small number of areas have been identified as particularly important in respect of research around children's lives in Ireland and are reflected in the Action Plan for this strategy (see *Chapter 5*).

SUMMARY

Four key cross-cutting issues were identified in the process of developing the present strategy. These were the need to develop a national strategic approach to information around children's lives; to improve administrative data systems; to build capacity across all areas of research and data development, particularly analytic capability; and to actively support evidence-informed policy and practice. These developments require a comprehensive and partnership approach across stakeholder areas and across the breadth of children's lives.

5. ACTION PLAN

Five objectives have been identified from the children's outcome areas discussed in Chapter 3 and the cross-cutting issues set out in Chapter 4. These objectives and associated action areas provide a framework under which actions agreed for implementation in this National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives are presented. The objectives are as follows:

Objective		Action area	
A	To generate a comprehensive and coherent understanding of children's development, needs and appropriate supports and services	1	Build and improve both survey and administrative data around children's lives.
		2	Support and promote maximum use of existing information.
		3	Prioritise and inform the generation of new research and data.
B	To develop research capacity in the area of children's research and data	4	Build capacity in the area of children's research and data, with a particular focus on supporting quantitative analysis.
C	To develop, support and promote good infrastructure in the area of children's research and data	5	Contribute to and inform national developments around research and data on children's lives. Provide a mechanism for the continued development of appropriate methodologies and concepts in relation to data on children's lives.
		6	Develop an overarching governance structure for research around children, including ethical review.
D	To improve monitoring and evaluation of children's services in Ireland at local and national level	7	Develop coherent approaches to evaluation of access to, cost and quality of services, supports and interventions around children's lives.
E	To support a continuum of research and data use within policy and practice settings	8	Improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of the potential of research and data in policy and practice settings. Contribute to change in attitudes, perceptions and ideas in relation to utilisation of information around children's lives. Provide resources and support for utilisation of research and data in policy and practice.

IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

Implementation of the actions set out under this strategy will be carried out by the organisations and structures named in the Action Plan (see *below*). While the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is responsible for certain actions in the strategy and will have an oversight role in relation to the overall action plan, individual Government departments or other organisations that have agreed to carry out specific actions in this strategy will be responsible for delivering on these.

The Research Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) will liaise with these organisations and will coordinate and populate a progress report template based on the structure of the Action Plan, as well as benchmarking progress against the indicators set out in the plan. Items assigned to an Interdepartmental Action Group will be reported on to the DCYA by the Chair of the relevant group.

Where actions refer to scoping or other preliminary activities from which further decisions and activities are anticipated, the follow-on actions will be documented and revised progress indicators assigned within an annual update of the Action Plan.

The implementation activities and reporting will be overseen by an Interagency Steering Group, the membership of which will be based on that of the original Research and Data Strategy Steering Group, but which may be expanded to take account of the full range of themes addressed in the Action Plan. The group will continue to be chaired by a senior official of the DCYA.

Annual updates will be published on the DCYA's website (www.dcy.a.ie) following the format used in the Action Plan.

The Action Plan now follows, consisting of 59 actions to be implemented across 24 organisations.

OBJECTIVE A: TO GENERATE A COHERENT UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT, NEEDS AND APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

It has become clear in the course of developing this strategy that substantial differences exist in the level and type of information available about different areas of children's lives. These differences will be addressed through a more coordinated and prioritised approach to children's research. One initial step will be the establishment of a prioritised children's research programme. This programme will build on and highlight existing and previous initiatives and, in particular, will promote the use of existing data sources, especially that emerging from the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland. This is particularly pertinent since it has become evident that there is a deficit in awareness of existing and emerging research and data among key potential users.

The DCYA will continue to fund the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland up to the end of the current phase, which is expected to be completed by 2012. Other funding initiatives will, where feasible, be coordinated with other organisations with relevant expertise in the area. For example, current partnerships have included participation in the Research Development Initiative of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and a collaboration around mapping child well-being indicators with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA).

As indicated in Chapter 3, a number of administrative systems have been identified for development:

- improvements to data systems on child protection and children in the care of the State, including those in detention;
- development of an integrated learner database for children in education and, in particular, a need for a primary school database;
- personal health record.

In addition to these three areas, support for improving existing data systems will also be addressed in this strategy. These include ensuring harmonisation across data collections and providing mechanisms through which data linkage can take place.

In summary, the key action areas under Objective A are:

Action Area 1 Build and improve both survey and administrative data around children's lives.

Action Area 2 Support and promote maximum use of existing information.

Action Area 3 Prioritise and inform the generation of new research and data.

The actions being undertaken under this objective are set out in the following table. Each action is assigned to a particular implementation structure, usually an individual organisation or a unit within an organisation; however, some are assigned to interagency structures or are being carried out by cooperation between two or more organisations. Each action may involve a number of different activities and each activity is related to one of the action areas outlined above.

OBJECTIVE A: To generate a coherent understanding of children's development, needs and appropriate supports and services

Action Area 1 = Build and improve both survey and administrative data around children's lives; **Action Area 2** = Support and promote maximum use of existing information; **Action Area 3** = Prioritise and inform the generation of new research and data.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A1	Arts Council	1	The level of involvement of children and young people in cultural activities and the related impact will be measured.	Relevant collections of data from arts organisations will use harmonised variables allowing for the identification of characteristics of children (0-17 cohort). The 2011 survey of arts organisations will introduce this process.	Standard age groups included in 2011 survey. Proposals to extend initiative agreed by end 2012.
		3	There will be increased and better quality information available on children's arts participation and the services supporting this.	The Arts Council will provide dedicated funding to support a research agenda around children's participation in the arts.	Agreement of key priority areas by end 2011. 1st study (or studies) commissioned by end 2012.
A2	Central Statistics Office	2	Measures of children's experiences of crime, their perceptions of criminal activity and its impact on their lives will be collected.	The scope of existing data on the PULSE system to further profile child victims of crime will be examined.	Dataset examined and any new measures possible from existing data identified by end 2013.
		3	Factors affecting children's pathways through the education system and their educational outcomes will be better understood.	Analysis of literacy and numeracy status of adults with children and of the link between parental education and occupation, and the educational, employment and skills outcomes of their adult children will be conducted on the data emerging from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.	Exploratory analysis and agreement of outputs by mid-2012. Publication of results by end 2013.
		3	The role of children and young people as carers will be further investigated.	A detailed analysis profiling those children who report in the 2011 Census that they undertake caring roles will be carried out.	Report published by end 2013.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	CSO <i>(continued)</i>	3	The family context in which children live will be described and the related outcomes analysed.	Further analysis will be conducted on existing Census data to provide a full profile of family and household structures and living arrangements for children in Ireland.	Report published by end 2013.
		1	Children will be a central focus for statistics on poverty and deprivation.	The CSO will continue and expand existing initiatives around collection and analysis of survey data at the individual level, rather than household level, and analysis of material specific to children.	Publication of report on child poverty based on EU-SILC data by end 2011.
		2	The extent to which children are victimised by crime will be examined.	Existing data sources on crime will be examined to identify the extent to which children are victims of crime.	Initial report produced by end 2014.
A3	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	2	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	An analysis and synthesis of key messages from existing reports and literature on children in need of protection and in the care of the State will be carried out.	Report published by mid-2013.
		1	Improved information on access to, quality and cost of child protection and welfare services.	A financial model in place to capture the cost of child protection and welfare services and to monitor expenditure and guide resource allocation.	To be addressed in the context of establishment of new Child and Family Support Agency and reported on before end 2013.
A4	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	2	Early childhood care and education will be the subject of increased reporting and analysis.	Process and intervention evaluations from the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) will be published.	Publication of findings by mid-2014.
A5	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	2	The extent to which children's voices are heard in policy and service development, and the impact of this participation will be examined.	A review of literature around participation initiatives and experiences with seldom-heard young people will be conducted.	Report on study available by end 2012.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	DCYA (continued)	3	The extent to which children's voices are heard in policy and service development, and the impact of this participation will be examined.	An examination of young people's perspectives on existing participation structures will be conducted.	Report on study published by end 2012.
A6	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	3	The generation of research and data collection to support policy and practice will be continued under a National Children's Research Programme.	The <i>Growing Up in Ireland</i> study will be continued (resources permitting).	2nd wave of data collection completed for Infant Cohort (at age 3 years) by end 2011 and for Child Cohort (at age 13 years) by mid-2012. Planning for 3rd wave of data collection completed by end 2011. Publication of full set of Phase 1 outputs by end 2013.
		3	The generation of research and data collection to support policy and practice will be continued under a National Children's Research Programme.	A prioritised programme for research on children's lives will be prepared and published.	Publication of programme by mid-2012. 1st research study commissioned by end 2012.
A7	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	1	Measures of participation, active citizenship and social capital among children and young people will be developed.	Measures of membership and volunteer activity with youth work organisations will be compiled from existing administrative data, including key classificatory variables such as age, sex and geography. These measures will be reported on annually.	First report by end 2012.
	Youth Affairs Unit	2	The role of youth work services in contributing to positive outcomes in the areas of youth development and youth support will be examined.	An international literature review on the outcomes for young people arising from involvement in youth work and youth support initiatives will be conducted.	Report published by end 2011.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A8	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Family Support Agency, through the IRCHSS Research Development Initiative	2	The impact of economic factors on children and family life, and of formal supports for economic security will be examined.	Four research projects currently underway will assess the scope of existing datasets to be analysed from a family well-being perspective. These will provide insights into the lives of families with children and a basis for further development of family research.	Production of series of reports on the findings of these studies to be completed by June 2014.
A9	Department of Education and Skills	1	Factors affecting children's pathways through the education system and their educational outcomes will be better understood.	Continuation of series of retention rate reports, with inclusion of markers of disadvantage.	Continuation and expansion of existing series of publications based on format of 2011 report.
		2	Factors affecting children's pathways through the education system and their educational outcomes will be better understood.	Pilot project on linkage of post-primary pupil database with other educational databases to examine scope for developing comprehensive information about learners studying for FETAC qualifications, using administrative sources of data.	Pilot project completed by mid-2012.
		3	Levels of educational attainment and the factors affecting such attainment will be better understood.	Participation will be continued in national assessment programmes (resources permitting), including the National Assessment of Mathematics and the National Assessment of English Reading.	Report on assessments in 2014.
		3	Levels of educational attainment and the factors affecting such attainment will be better understood.	Participation will be continued in international assessment programmes (resources permitting), including Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).	Report on PIRLS and TIMSS in 2012. Report on PISA in 2013.
A10	Department of Health Health Promotion Unit	2	Improved and increased use of existing research and data on the topic of alcohol and drugs in relation to children's lives.	An anonymised dataset will be made available from the 2011 ESPAD Survey through the Irish Social Science Data Archive.	Dataset lodged by end 2013.
	Health Promotion Unit	3	Information on children's health outcomes and services will be collected, analysed and disseminated.	Continuation of key surveys around children's health, such as ESPAD and HBSC (resources permitting).	Continued data collection in next phase of the relevant surveys.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	Department of Health (continued)	2	Improved and increased use of existing research and data on the topic of alcohol and drugs in relation to children's lives.	Existing research in relation to children living with parental substance misuse will be explored to identify remaining deficits in knowledge of this topic.	Decision regarding commissioning of future research by Q1 2012.
A11	Department of Social Protection	3	Children will be a central focus for statistics on poverty and deprivation.	The ESRI will conduct an analysis of 2009 EU-SILC survey data, in particular items on child deprivation.	Publication of report by mid-2012.
		3	Children will be a central focus for statistics on poverty and deprivation.	A 'Social Portrait of People with Disabilities' will profile poverty and social inclusion issues for people with disability and will include prevalence, educational and related data on children as part of the once-off 'Social Portrait' series, which provides relevant data and identifies issues with respect to vulnerable groups at different points in the lifecycle.	Launch of report and associated seminar in September 2011.
A12	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	1	There will be increased standardisation in reporting on children's services and amenities at both national and sub-national level.	Relevant data collections will make increased use of harmonised variables allowing for the identification of characteristics of children (0-17 cohort) across data sources.	Analysis of and reporting on housing data will include outputs relating to children. Options for increasing the level of detail on children through analysis of this data will be further explored.
		3	The impact of children's physical environment and of local facilities and services on their lives will be investigated.	A dedicated fund will be provided to support research on this topic.	Research/data development priorities agreed and funding of €60,000 provided in 2011 to address these.
A13	An Garda Síochána	2	Data on children and young people who interact with the youth justice system will be further developed to enable tracking of pathways through the system and outcomes for the children and young people concerned.	Data held on children referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme will continue to be reported on annually.	Continuation of annual reports over the period 2011-2016.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A14	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey	1	Measures of nutritional behaviours and related outcomes for children and young people will be produced.	Nutritional behaviours and outcomes will be the subject of specialised analysis and publication by the HBSC Survey. Consideration will be given to increasing the level of detail on diet and nutrition to enhance these measures.	Report on relevant items available by end 2012.
		1	Measures of physical activity levels among children and young people will be produced.	Physical activity behaviours, including transport choices, will be the subject of analysis and report in the HBSC Survey.	Report on relevant items available by end 2012.
A15	Health Information and Quality Authority	2	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	A commentary on the findings and recommendations for inspections undertaken of children's residential centres and units managed by the HSE will be produced, with a focus on suitability of facilities in which children and young people in care are placed.	Report produced annually over the period 2011-2016, with first publication at end 2011.
		2	The interaction between drug use and youth offending will be described.	ESPAD data will be fully mined to describe drug use and associated problem behaviours, and to profile the young people involved.	Production of report for electronic dissemination within 2 years of release of anonymised dataset for analysis.
A16	Health Research Board (HRB)	2	Improved and increased use of existing research and data on the topic of drugs in relation to children's lives.	An annual digest of national research in relation to drug use among children and young people will be produced.	Publication of 1st digest by end 2012 and continuation annually thereafter.
		2	Increased and coordinated dissemination of existing information on drug misuse among children and young people.	An annual report summarising existing survey data on drug misuse by children and young people will be produced,	First report by end 2012.
		2	Increased and coordinated dissemination of existing information on drug misuse among children and young people.	Data from ESPAD and other relevant surveys will be mined to the fullest possible extent and the outputs disseminated in formats customised to the needs of a range of users, including short summaries and key messages.	Production of report for electronic dissemination within 2 years of release of anonymised dataset for analysis.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	HRB (continued)	2	Services for children and young people with disabilities will be examined in terms of coverage and effectiveness.	Further analysis from the HRB disability databases of data on provision uptake and unmet need for Speech & Language and Occupational therapies for children with special needs will be conducted.	The Annual Report on the disability databases for 2014 will include information on this area.
		3	Mechanisms to support the development of measures of levels of congenital anomalies and other health conditions in the child population in Ireland will be developed.	Applications focusing on health services and/or population health aspects of children's research will be highlighted and welcomed in publicly funded research calls (e.g. projects, programmes, networks, fellowships).	Number of proposals submitted and number and amount of awards made in this area of children's research by the HRB.
		3	Mechanisms to investigate and report on the nature and level of mental health services being supplied to children and young people in Ireland will be developed.	Applications focusing on health services and/or population health aspects of children's research will be highlighted and welcomed in publicly funded research calls (e.g. projects, programmes, networks, fellowships).	Number of proposals submitted and number and amount of awards made in this area of children's research by the HRB.
A17	Health Service Executive (HSE)	3	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	A review of the needs of children in alternative care with placement patterns showing risk of need of high-intensity input will be conducted. This will inform future service planning for all children in alternative care.	Report published by end 2011.
	This study will be managed by the HSE and an Advisory Steering Committee will support the overall research process	3	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	The HSE will, with young people's consent, conduct a longitudinal study to follow young people who leave care, to map their transition to adulthood (as per Ryan Report, 2009). Representation from young people who have been in care will be included as part of the design phase of the study.	Tendering process to commence in Q1 2012. Design phase to commence in Q3 2012, with study to commence in Q1 2013.

Action No.	Implementation structure		Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A18	Health Service Executive (HSE)	Crisis Pregnancy Programme	1	Information systems to report on the sexual health and behaviours of young people in Ireland will be developed.	Consideration will be given to the examination of issues of sexual identity in future research commissioned by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme.	Inclusion of relevant research questions in future funded research. Research reports will be available.
			2	Information systems to report on the sexual health and behaviours of young people in Ireland will be developed.	Funding and support will be available for secondary analysis of datasets from the Irish Contraception and Crisis Pregnancy Studies and the Irish Study of Sexual Health and Relationships.	Programme of support for such analysis in place by 2011. Publication of key findings by 2013.
			3	Information systems to report on the sexual health and behaviours of young people in Ireland will be developed.	A study to examine patterns of service engagement among women experiencing crisis pregnancy will be carried out (subject to funding) by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, which will include data on females aged under 18 attending services and related outcomes.	Study commissioned in 2012. Report, including relevant data on under 18s, published by 2013.
			3	Information systems to report on the sexual health and behaviours of young people in Ireland will be developed.	A report on the attitudes and decision-making process of adolescent males in relation to unplanned pregnancy will be published.	Publication by end 2011.
			3	Services and supports for sexual health and relationships and sexual education will be reported on.	A study of sexual health and sexual education service needs among young people in the care of the State will be conducted.	Study commissioned by end 2011. Report available 2013.
			1	Services and supports for increased physical activity by children and young people will be reported on. The level of involvement of children and young people in sporting activities and the related impact will be measured.	The Irish Sports Council will examine administrative data collection with particular reference to club-based data for the purpose of improving and harmonising data on facilities and services for children and young people.	Identification of key areas for development by end 2013.
A19	Irish Sports Council					

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	Irish Sports Council (continued)	2		The Irish Sports Council will provide special analyses of the information reported annually by Local Sports Partnerships (resources permitting).	Number of requests received and responded to.
		2	Measures of physical activity levels among children and young people will be produced.	Suitable analysis of this topic will be promoted through publication of results and lodging of data in the appropriate archive from the recent study of sports participation and physical activity among children.	Report published in 2011. Data lodged by September 2011.
		2	The impact of the built environment on children's physical activity levels will be assessed.	Data from the above study will be made available to allow examination of the impact of the physical environment and built facilities on young people's participation in physical activity and how the environment can promote increased physical activity.	Data lodged in Irish Social Science Data Archive by September 2011.
		3	Measures of physical activity levels among children and young people will be produced.	A repeat study on children's physical activity will take place within an appropriate timeframe.	Decision to repeat study taken by end 2012.
		3	The level of involvement of children and young people in sporting activities and the related impact will be measured. Measures of nutritional behaviours and related outcomes for children and young people will be produced.	Research on children and young people will be prioritised in the Irish Sports Council's research programme.	Identification of key areas for development by end 2012 to inform Irish Sports Council's research programme for 2013-2015. Research on children and young people included in Irish Sports Council's research programme for 2013-2015.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A20	Irish Youth Justice Service	3	Data on children and young people who interact with the youth justice system will be further developed to enable tracking of pathways through the system and outcomes for the children and young people concerned.	A study of children's journey into detention (aimed at generating an understanding of similarities and differences between children's pathways to a justice placement in a children's detention school and a welfare placement in a special care unit) will be carried out on a cohort of children admitted to detention in 2011 and with retrospective data.	1st results published by 2014.
		3	Behavioural patterns in children and young people and related outcomes will be investigated.	A study using action research will be conducted, initially in a number of Garda Youth Diversion Project trial sites, measuring empathy, impulsiveness and pro-social orientation at the start and finish of interventions. Subject to review of the measures obtained, data collection will be extended to all projects.	Initial study in trial sites completed and results disseminated by Q2 2012. Depending on trial results, national roll-out of data collection in 2014.
		3	The full range of supports and services available to existing young offenders and their families, and to young people to reduce youth offending, will be profiled.	A research project on levels of compliance with community sanctions and on how systems in the youth justice service have evolved will be conducted.	Publication of findings by end 2015.
		3	Behavioural patterns in children and young people and related outcomes will be investigated.	A national profile of participants in the Garda Youth Diversion Projects will be generated using standard measures of risk and service need.	Profile compiled at national level by end 2014.
		3	The impact and effectiveness of mental health services for children and young people will be assessed.	The topic of effectiveness of mental health promotion and awareness programmes in different settings and with different groups of young people, including community and school-based, will be considered for inclusion in future commissioned research.	Mental Health Commission will include a study on this area by December 2016 (resources permitting).
		3	The impact and effectiveness of mental health services for children and young people will be assessed.	An assessment of the extent to which evidence-based interventions are utilised in child and adolescent mental health services in the context of identified needs and rights of children with mental health problems will be considered for inclusion in future commissioned research.	Mental Health Commission will include a study on this area by December 2016 (resources permitting).
A21	Mental Health Commission	3	The impact and effectiveness of mental health services for children and young people will be assessed.	An assessment of the extent to which evidence-based interventions are utilised in child and adolescent mental health services in the context of identified needs and rights of children with mental health problems will be considered for inclusion in future commissioned research.	Mental Health Commission will include a study on this area by December 2016 (resources permitting).

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
A22	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	3	Factors affecting children's pathways through the education system and their educational outcomes will be better understood.	Publication of findings from the Post-Primary Longitudinal Study.	Publication of report on experience of students in senior cycle education published by end 2011.
		3		Study on teachers' experiences of school aspects of <i>Growing Up in Ireland</i> study.	Study commissioned in 2011.
		3		Comparative study on international practice in curriculum development produced.	Study commissioned in 2011.
		3		Research paper on diversity and polarisation in the second-level school system produced.	Study commissioned in 2011.
		3		Research paper on transition from second-level to third-level education produced.	Study commissioned in 2011.
		3		Research paper on oral language development in early years, emergent literacy development and elements of an integrated language curriculum produced.	Study commissioned in 2011.
		2	Information around learning disability and special educational needs will be expanded and harmonised.	The NCSE will continue to analyse and publish data in relation to its activities and will engage with the DCYA on developments in its information systems.	Regular publication of key statistics.
A23	National Council for Special Education (NCSE)	3	The generation of research and data collection to support policy and practice in special education will be continued under the research programme of the National Council for Special Education.	The NCSE's research programme will be continued.	Publication of additional key reports in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
	National Nutrition Surveillance Centre (NNSC)	2	Services and supports for improved outcomes relating to nutrition and physical activity by children and young people will be reported on.	The NNSC will undertake analysis of existing data from the WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance initiative around policies and practices in schools in relation to nutrition.	Initial analysis conducted by August 2012. Findings published and circulated to key stakeholders by end 2012.
A25	Action Group	3	A methodology for assessing the total cost borne by families in relation to a child's disability will be developed.	A scoping study on determining direct and indirect costs borne by private households or individuals will be conducted.	Scoping study to commence by end 2015.

OBJECTIVE B: TO DEVELOP RESEARCH CAPACITY IN THE AREA OF CHILDREN'S RESEARCH AND DATA

One area of particular concern, identified in Chapter 4, relates to limited capacity among personnel involved in research around children's lives to use and apply quantitative methods to large datasets. It is clear that Action Area 2 of Objective A (i.e. Support and promote maximum use of existing information) can only take place in the context of sufficient numbers of researchers and analysts with the capacity to interrogate, analyse, evaluate and utilise the data. For that reason, developments in respect of quantitative analysis will form a focus for this strategy.

As noted in Chapter 4, there are many national initiatives to support the development of skills and competencies among researchers and some of these are reflected in this Action Plan. In addition to awards and programmes supported by the national research funding bodies and institutes, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will continue with the existing National Children's Research Fellowship Programme, which awards Masters and PhD fellowships annually through a highly competitive process and which will continue to prioritise not only the development of research capacity, but also the priority themes identified in the present strategy.

In summary, the key action area under Objective B will focus on:

Action Area 4 Building capacity in the area of children's research and data, with a particular focus on supporting quantitative analysis.

OBJECTIVE B: To develop research capacity in the area of children's research and data

Action Area 4 = Building capacity in the area of children's research and data, with a particular focus on supporting quantitative analysis

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
B1	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	4	Levels of educational attainment and the factors affecting such attainment will be better understood.	Summer schools to promote increased analysis of existing data on educational attainment will be conducted.	One school completed by end 2011.
		4	The programme to build capacity for data analysis and research will be continued.	The National Children's Research Fellowship Programme will continue to operate, supporting postgraduate studies through funding and placement opportunities.	Number of studies and placements completed over the period 2011-2016.
		4		The DCYA will continue to support and participate in the Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland.	Seed funding provided and participation at committee level.
		4	An improved understanding of factors affecting children's health and well-being will be developed through increased use of existing information sources.	A summer school to promote increased awareness and capacity for use of information sources on children's health and well-being will be conducted.	One school completed by end 2011.
		4		A summer school to promote increased awareness and capacity for use of information sources on child protection, physical and mental health (including issues relating to suicide) and other aspects of safety and protection for children will be conducted.	One school completed by end 2011.

OBJECTIVE C: TO DEVELOP, SUPPORT AND PROMOTE GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE AREA OF CHILDREN'S RESEARCH AND DATA

A number of issues raised in the development of this strategy draw attention to the need for an improved infrastructure to support research and data around children's lives. Improved metadata, harmonisation of concepts and classifications, interagency cooperation, and data sharing and linkage have all been identified as essential developments. Related to these are issues of governance, ethics, processes and procedures. The actions set out below reflect all these issues.

In summary, the key action areas under Objective C are:

- Action Area 5** **Contribute to and inform national developments around research and data on children's lives. Provide a mechanism for the continued development of appropriate methodologies and concepts in relation to data on children's lives.**
- Action Area 6** **Develop an overarching governance structure for research around children, including ethical review.**

OBJECTIVE C: To develop, support and promote good infrastructure in the area of children's research and data

Action Area 5 = Contribute to and inform national developments around research and data on children's lives. Provide a mechanism for the continued development of appropriate methodologies and concepts in relation to data on children's lives; **Action Area 6** = Develop an overarching governance structure for research around children, including ethical review.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
C1	Arts Council	5	There will be increased and better quality information available on children's arts participation and the services supporting this.	Children and young people will form a central focus for research and data review processes of the Arts Council as part of <i>Developing the Arts in Ireland: Arts Council's Strategic Overview 2011-2013</i> .	Relevant changes to data collection and research processes agreed by end 2013.
		5		Harmonisation of key variables in relevant datasets from arts organisations will take place, which will facilitate the identification of children and young people.	2011 data collection constructed to allow identification of the relevant age groups within client base of responding organisations by June 2012.
C2		6		The Arts Council will take a coordinating role across organisations involved in the delivery of arts programmes to children and young people to examine options for improving data on children's arts participation.	Coordination structure/mechanisms established by mid-2012. Development of a detailed plan to better describe this aspect of children's lives by end 2013.
	Central Statistics Office	5	Data linkage and analysis of administrative data will be exploited to the full to provide further insights into children's lives.	The Administrative Data Centre will undertake a project examining new pathways for collaboration with the DCYA, exploring options for profiling children's lives from its data holdings and the Person Activity Register.	Initial scoping conducted in 2012. Publication of agreed outputs.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
C3	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	5	Early childhood care and education will be the subject of increased reporting and analysis.	The DCYA will participate in CSO survey liaison groups to further develop survey items on childcare and related issues.	Increase in child-focused measures and outputs in official statistics over the period 2011-2016.
	Childcare Directorate with Central Statistics Office	5		The ECCE database of the DCYA will be supplied to the Administrative Data Centre of the CSO to contribute to increased analysis in this area.	Data supplied annually.
C4	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	5	Existing measures and indicator sets will be expanded to reflect the breadth of children's lives.	The national set of child well-being indicators will be reviewed to examine options for new indicators in areas such as play, recreation, volunteering and social capital.	Review completed and recommendations implemented in 2014 report.
	Research Unit	6	Governance and oversight structures for children's research will be supported.	The DCYA Research Unit will contribute to and support the development of mechanisms for ethical oversight of children's research.	Publication of guidelines for ethics in research involving children by 2012.
C5	Department of Health	5	Improved and increased use of existing research and data on the topic of alcohol and drugs in relation to children's lives.	Feasibility study to identify data sources and research methods (including data mining, harmonisation of existing sources and suitable classificatory variables) to provide a baseline indicator of substance misuse among youth at risk and to monitor changes over time.	Commission feasibility study by Q3 2012. Submission of feasibility study report by Q2 2013. Commission of research to establish baseline indicator by Q4 2013. Identification of baseline indicator by Q4 2014. National monitoring report every 4 years thereafter.
	National Advisory Committee on Drugs	5			
C6	Health Research Board	5	Services for children and young people with disabilities will be examined in terms of coverage and effectiveness.	Initiatives will be undertaken to increase the coverage of the HRB disability databases (NIDD and NPSDD), including additional information on levels of participation in different activities.	A report on the coverage of the databases will be conducted and published by end 2016.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
C7	Health Service Executive	5	Information on children in need of protection and in the care of the State and the services they receive will be collected and reported on in a standardised and systematic manner.	<p>A National Child Care Information System will be deployed.</p> <p>This system will record the key activities, such as actions, plans, participants, decisions and outcomes (as defined in the standard social work business processes), from initial contact through to case closure.</p> <p>The system will be capable of being interrogated and analysed to give insight into (child care) service pathways and the key characteristics of children interacting with the care system.</p>	<p>Referral and assessment data will be available from the manual system in 2012 and for Children in Care and other pathways in 2013.</p> <p>The full search and interrogation functions will be available when the ICT system is deployed: referral and assessment from 2014 and for Children in Care and other processes in 2015.</p>
C8	Health Service Executive Crisis Pregnancy Programme	5	<p>Information on children's health outcomes and services will be collected, analysed and disseminated.</p> <p>Information systems to report on the sexual health and behaviours of young people in Ireland will be developed.</p>	<p>The HSE will review the utilisation of the Personal Health Record within the delivery of child health services and make a recommendation about its implementation nationally.</p> <p>The feasibility of adding a question on crisis pregnancy to national patient registration systems in maternity hospitals will be examined, based on initial discussions with the relevant hospitals and the Department of Health.</p> <p>The feasibility of revising birth notification forms to enable analyses of teenage births by area deprivation indicators will be examined, based on discussions with the relevant Departments and the CSO.</p>	<p>Recommendation on implementation by July 2012.</p> <p>Feasibility of activity examined in 2012.</p> <p>If feasible, question agreed and included on the relevant registration databases/forms by end 2012.</p>

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
C9	Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS)	5	Data on children and young people who interact with the youth justice system will be further developed to enable tracking of pathways through the system and outcomes for the children and young people concerned.	Existing initiatives between the IYJS and the Garda Youth Diversion Projects around gathering of data, harmonisation of key outcomes and measures will be continued, working towards a national profile of agreed measures. This will include: (a) an agreed logic model approach to annual planning and output monitoring; (b) use of standard risk assessment; (c) use of standard outcome measures; (d) recidivism studies.	Profile of existing projects developed using standardised measures: (a) logic model approach by 2012; (b) standard use of risk assessment by 2012; (c) trial of outcome measures decision on roll-out by 2012. Recidivism study of trial sites and consideration of wider studies (in discussion with An Garda Síochána) by 2012.
		5	The full range of supports and services available to existing young offenders and their families, and to young people to reduce youth offending, will be profiled.	Data holdings on supports and services provided by the youth justice system will be reviewed to identify options for greater coordination in compilation and reporting of statistical and other information.	Review of data holdings completed by end 2012.
C10	National Nutrition Surveillance Centre (NNSC)	5	Data on childhood body mass index (BMI) will be harmonised and reported on in a consistent and comparable manner.	A review of existing data holdings on childhood BMI will be conducted, resulting in a report on the coverage and comparability of the data. This review will include an examination of the geographical coverage of the data and options for mapping the datasets.	Report on current status of data by February 2013.
		5	Data on childhood body mass index (BMI) will be harmonised and reported on in a consistent and comparable manner.	The NNSC and DCYA will consult on the development of appropriate measures relating to children's nutritional outcomes and agree key indicators, including international comparisons and appropriate disaggregation. The NNSC will identify data to populate these indicators based on its review of data sources.	Consultation conducted as part of review of child well-being indicators in 2013. Measures included in 2014 edition of the <i>State of the Nation's Children</i> report.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
C11	Action Group chaired by Central Statistics Office (CSO)	6	A more harmonised approach will be developed across data collections on children's lives.	The CSO will collaborate with the DCYA in the establishment of an interagency group to agree and recommend changes in national data collections to ensure a harmonised approach to data collection on children's lives. This group will be chaired by a CSO official.	Core group established and key data holdings for investigation identified by end 2012. Set of recommendations agreed and circulated to key agencies by end 2014.
C12	Action Group led by Irish Sports Council	5	Measures of physical activity levels among children and young people will be produced.	A review of methodologies for recording physical activity levels will be conducted and recommendations made for reporting on activity levels for the child population, including participation in school-based activity.	Report on review of methodologies will be published by mid-2015.
C13	Action Group led by National Disability Authority and including National Council for Special Education	5	Statistical definitions of disability will be harmonised as far as possible across data sources in order to better establish an overall disability prevalence rate, prevalence rates for specified conditions and prevalence rate for sub-groups within the population.	An analysis of disability markers will be undertaken for the purpose of recommending a harmonised set of markers for use with surveys and administrative data.	Report on analysis by July 2014.
		5	Information around learning disability and special educational needs will be expanded and harmonised.	A review of data holdings on intellectual disability and special educational needs will be conducted and recommendations for use of agreed variables and classifications developed.	Review of existing data holdings completed and recommendations developed and disseminated by end 2014.
C14	Action Group, with Department of Social Protection and Central Statistics Office	5	A comprehensive profile of the living conditions of children in Ireland will be developed.	An examination of existing data on households with children will take place to determine where additional data are required and what are the optimal sources for these data.	Group established by mid-2012. Report with recommendations by end 2013.

OBJECTIVE D: TO IMPROVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN IRELAND AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The need for improved information on services emerged as a clear theme from all stakeholders in the development of this strategy, including children and young people themselves. Data on children's services at local level and the links between those services and children's outcomes are considered essential to service planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Children and young people require reliable information on the services available to them. A more comprehensive approach to local-level services will be implemented over the course of this strategy and actions relating to this have been agreed and are outlined below.

In summary, the key action area under Objective D is:

Action Area 7 **Develop coherent approaches to evaluation of access to, cost and quality of services, supports and interventions around children's lives.**

OBJECTIVE D: To improve monitoring and evaluation of children's services in Ireland at local and national level

Action Area 7 = Develop coherent approaches to evaluation of access to, cost and quality of services, supports and interventions around children's lives.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
D1	Citizen's Information Board	7	Information on services available to children, young people and their families will be available in a more centralised structure.	The Citizen's Information Board will continue to develop its existing 'life events' approach to ensure an increased focus on children in its online information on service type and availability.	Children and families stream in key information sources by end 2014.
	and DCYA, Childcare Directorate	7	Early childhood care and education will be the subject of increased reporting and analysis.	A listing of pre-school services enrolled in the Free Pre-School Year Scheme will be made available online.	Directory available by end 2012.
D2	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	7	Early childhood care and education (ECCE) will be the subject of increased reporting and analysis.	A key set of indicators on ECCE will be developed using existing data sources, such as the Free Pre-School Year Scheme and Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) data.	Initial set of indicators agreed and published by end of 2013.
	Childcare Directorate and Health Service Executive	7	Early childhood care and education will be the subject of increased reporting and analysis.	A biennial report on key developments in pre-school services will be compiled.	First report produced in 2012.
D3	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	7	Student participation in decision-making in education will be profiled.	An audit of participation in School Council structures will be conducted.	Publication of findings by September 2011.
	Participation Unit	7	Measures of social capital and active citizenship among children and young people will be developed.	A standardised data collection template will be developed for use nationwide to record the involvement of children and young people in decision-making and advisory structures, such as Comhairlí na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg.	Template designed and in use by end 2013.
D4	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	7	Children's outcomes and services will continue to be the subject of monitoring and reporting.	Biennial publication of the <i>State of the Nation's Children</i> report for Ireland and further development of dissemination formats.	Publication of <i>State of the Nation's Children</i> report in 2012, 2014 and 2016.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
	DCYA (continued)	7	Children's outcomes and services will continue to be the subject of monitoring and reporting.	Data to support and inform the work of county Children's Services Committees (CSCs) will be further developed.	Scoping of potential data sources and systems for use by CSCs completed by mid-2012.
D5	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	7	The role of youth work services in providing quality activities, programmes and supports will be examined.	A qualitative assessment of the role of youth work in the lives of children and young people in Ireland today will be conducted, based on the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS).	Progress reports will be monitored annually, leading to a composite report on the first implementation cycle of the NQS (2011-2013), published by end 2014.
		7	The role of youth work services in promoting participation and active citizenship will be examined.	Data will be compiled on funding of youth organisations, initiatives and programmes by content area, client group, location and levels of participation.	First report by end 2012.
D6	Department of Health	7	Information on children's health outcomes and services will be collected, analysed and disseminated.	Existing initiatives to include indicators on child health and health services in Department of Health publications (such as <i>Key Trends</i>) will be continued and expanded.	Child-focused measures included in future <i>Key Trends and Health Statistics</i> publications.
D7	Department of Social Protection	7	The impact and efficacy of formal supports for children experiencing poverty and disadvantage will be assessed.	As part of the implementation of the policy and value-for-money (VfM) review of child income support payments by the Department of Social Protection (November 2010), performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of child income support payments in addressing policy objectives will be developed and published in the Department's Annual Output Statement.	Indicator set published with Department of Social Protection's Annual Output Statement in 2012.
		7	Children will be a central focus for statistics on poverty and deprivation.	Monitoring and review of national poverty targets as set out in <i>Towards 2016</i> and in the National Reform Programme, including a focus on child poverty.	Report on the review of the national poverty target submitted to Government by end 2011. Annual review of progress as part of EU monitoring process in June each year.

Action No.	Implementation structure		Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
D8	An Garda Síochána	Office for Children and Youth Affairs	7	Data on children and young people who interact with the youth justice system will be further developed to enable tracking of pathways through the system and outcomes for the children and young people concerned.	An exploratory analysis will be conducted of data on children deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the Garda Youth Diversion Projects to examine their pathways and outcomes through the justice system.	Initial analysis conducted by end 2013.
D9	Health Service Executive		7	Information on children in the care of the State and the services they receive will be collected and reported on in a standardised and systematic manner.	A national set of key performance indicators on the services and supports being provided to children in care will be reported on annually and will be subject to on-going review and analysis.	Publication in 2011 and annually thereafter.
			7	Information on children in contact with the Child Protection System and the services they receive will be collected and reported on in a standardised and systematic manner.	A national set of key performance indicators on the services and supports being provided to children in contact with the Child Protection System will be reported on annually and will be subject to ongoing review and analysis.	Publication in 2011 and annually thereafter.
D10	Health Service Executive	Crisis Pregnancy Programme	7	Services and supports for sexual health and relationships and sexual education will be reported on. An assessment of demand for supports needed in relation to crisis pregnancy, both during pregnancy and after the birth, will be conducted.	Current initiatives to report on crisis pregnancy services will be continued and published, including: (a) the availability of mapped data on service provision; (b) publication of a review of supported accommodation services; (c) funding for secondary analysis of datasets from the Irish Contraception and Crisis Pregnancy Studies and the Irish Study of Sexual Health and Relationships.	Continued availability of information. Publication of mapped data and review of supported accommodation by mid-2012. Support for secondary analysis to commence in 2011-2012.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
D11	Irish Youth Justice Service and Probation Service	7	The full range of supports and services available to existing young offenders and their families, and to young people to reduce youth offending, will be profiled.	A practice-based study will be undertaken in partnership with the Probation Service to identify performance outcome measures to be applied to funded community organisations working with young people.	Standard set of outcome measures agreed by 2013.
D12	Library Council	7	The level of involvement of children and young people in cultural activities and the related impact will be measured.	Relevant data on the use by children and young people of library services will be compiled and reported on in a standardised way.	Data will be included in the Library Council's annual statistical releases. Regular reports will be published on Library Council's website and related websites.

OBJECTIVE E: TO SUPPORT A CONTINUUM OF RESEARCH AND DATA USE WITHIN POLICY AND PRACTICE SETTINGS

A very clear commitment to embedding an evidence-informed approach to policy-making exists across Government and the issue of creating linkages between research providers and users has emerged as an important one in this strategy. The area of knowledge transfer has been evolving in recognition of the complexity of getting research into use. The need to link research and data findings more closely to policy and service delivery, with the development of short policy briefings tailored to the needs of particular communities, has emerged as a key message in this strategy.

In summary, the key action area under Objective E, identified as of particular importance in respect of research around children's lives in Ireland, is:

Action Area 8 **Improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of the potential of research and data in policy and practice settings. Contribute to change in attitudes, perceptions and ideas in relation to utilisation of information around children's lives. Provide resources and support for utilisation of research and data in policy and practice.**

OBJECTIVE E: To support a continuum of research and data use within policy and practice settings

Action Area 8 = Improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of the potential of research and data in policy and practice settings. Contribute to change in attitudes, perceptions and ideas in relation to utilisation of information around children's lives. Provide resources and support for utilisation of research and data in policy and practice.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
E1	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Participation Unit	8	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	Findings from a consultation process with children and young people in the care of the State will be disseminated, with a summary of key messages for policy-makers and service providers.	Report available by July 2011.
E2	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Research Unit	8	A strategic approach to dissemination of information on children's lives will be further developed.	The DCYA in association with the Centre for Effective Services (CES) will consider options to develop a more centralised dissemination/access mechanism for research and data about children in Ireland. A strategy for knowledge transfer from the <i>Growing Up in Ireland</i> study will be prepared and published.	Decision on appropriate mechanism by end 2012. Publication of strategy by end 2011.
		8	A strategic approach to dissemination of information on children's lives will be further developed.	Findings from each study funded under the National Children's Research Programme will be presented to policy and practice communities in a format that meets their needs.	Production of key findings and briefing notes on each research project. Seminars conducted for key audiences on outputs from National Children's Research Programme.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
E3	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Family Support Agency	8	The family context in which children live will be described and the related outcomes analysed.	The Family Support Agency will maintain its current database of family-based research and will periodically (resources permitting) canvass the major institutes and agencies to identify new material for inclusion, as well as updating the database with details of new in-house research.	Database updated on annual basis.
E4	Health Information and Quality Authority	8	The lives of children in need of protection and in the care of the State, the systems that exist to support them and their progression after their time in care will be better understood.	A summary of key findings from inspection reports of children's residential centres and foster care services will be produced in order to highlight concerns, good practice and recommendations made following inspections and to identify the key learning points arising.	Report produced annually over the period 2011-2016, with first publication at end 2011.
E5	Health Service Executive HSE Health Intelligence Unit, in collaboration with stakeholders, will leverage the potential of Health Intelligence Ireland, with a special focus on children's health	8	Available data on children's health and services will be made available to Health Intelligence Ireland for analysis and dissemination.	The Health Intelligence Unit of the HSE will examine (resources permitting) options for exploiting the potential of available information on children's health and services through the use of geographic (Health Atlas) and quality display methodologies (National Quality Assurance Intelligence System) as developed for other clinical domains.	Availability of phased analysis and display modules.
	HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme and Department of Education and Skills	8	Services and supports for sexual health and relationships and sexual education will be reported on.	Publication of research report, <i>Use of 'outside visitors' in provision of RSE programmes in post-primary schools.</i>	Report available in late 2011.
E6	National Council for Special Education	8	Information around learning disability and special educational needs will be expanded and harmonised.	Findings from the longitudinal study of special education provision in Irish schools will be published.	Publication of key findings expected by end 2014.

Action No.	Implementation structure	Action Area	Outcome area	Activities	Progress indicator
E7	Action Group led by National Disability Authority and including National Council for Special Education	8	Statistical definitions of disability will be harmonised as far as possible across data sources in order to better establish an overall disability prevalence rate, prevalence rates for specified conditions and prevalence rate for sub-groups within the population.	The findings from an analysis of disability markers among existing data sources (see Action C13) and recommendations for improvements will be actively disseminated and promoted among key stakeholders.	Preliminary dissemination of report by July 2015.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DCYA NATIONAL CHILDREN'S RESEARCH PROGRAMME – COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

Year published	Principal Investigator and Institution	Title of research study
2005	Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn National University of Ireland, Galway	Children's Understandings of Well-being
	Dr. Aine de Róiste Cork Institute of Technology	Young people's views about opportunities, barriers and supports to recreation and leisure: Executive Summary
	Professor Robbie Gilligan Trinity College, Dublin	Lives in Foster Care: The educational and social support experiences of young people aged 13-14 years in long-term foster care
	Jean Whyte Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Second-level Student Councils in Ireland: A study of enablers, barriers and supports
2006	Carmel Corrigan Independent researcher	The Development and Implementation of Child Impact Statements in Ireland
	Dr. Paula Mayock Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Understanding Youth Homelessness in Dublin City: Key findings from the first phase of a longitudinal cohort study
	Dr. Imelda Coyne Dublin City University	Giving Children a Voice: Investigation of children's experiences of participation in consultation and decision-making in Irish hospitals
	Dr. Ursula Kilkelly University College, Cork	The Child's Right to be heard in the Healthcare Setting: Perspectives of children, parents and health professionals
	Dr. Helen McAvoy Institute of Public Health in Ireland	Unequal at birth: Inequalities in the occurrence of low birthweight babies in Ireland (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcy.a.ie</i>)
2007	Fergus Hogan Waterford Institute of Technology	Listening to children: Children's stories of domestic violence
	Stella Downey Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology	Play and Technology for children aged 4-12 (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcy.a.ie</i>)
2008	Dr. Celia Keenaghan HSE and KIDSCREEN Group Europe	A study on the Quality of Life Tool KIDSCREEN for children and adolescents in Ireland: Results of the KIDSCREEN National Survey 2005
	Dr. Helen Buckley Trinity College, Dublin	Service users' perceptions of the Irish Child Protection System
	Dr. Mairéad Seymour Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology	Young People on Remand
2009	Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn National University of Ireland, Galway	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Ireland 2006. Middle Childhood Study: Socio-demographic patterns in the health behaviours, risk behaviours, health outcomes and social contexts of young people's health
	Dr. Heike Felzmann National University of Ireland, Galway	Children's Research and Ethical Review: Executive Summary

2010	Professor Robbie Gilligan Trinity College, Dublin	Young People and Public Libraries in Ireland: Issues and opportunities (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcyia.ie</i>)
	Dr. Elizabeth Nixon Dublin City University	Children's Perspectives on Parenting Styles and Discipline – A developmental approach: Main Report (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcyia.ie</i>)
	Dr. Anne Marie Halpenny Dublin Institute of Technology	Parents' Perspectives on Parenting Styles and Disciplining Children: Main Report (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcyia.ie</i>)
	Dr. Elizabeth Nixon and Dr. Anne Marie Halpenny	Parenting Styles and Discipline – Parents' and Children's Perspectives: Summary Report
	Dr. Heike Felzmann National University of Ireland, Galway	Ethical Review and Children's Research in Ireland: Main Report (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcyia.ie</i>)
	Dr. Ann McCarthy Health Research Board	A map of health research undertaken on children in Ireland: January 2000 to mid-November 2008. Findings from a systematic examination of peer-reviewed journal publications (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie</i>)
	Dr. Allyn Fives Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway	Study of Young Carers in the Irish Population: Main Report (<i>published online, available at www.childrensdatabase.ie or www.dcyia.ie</i>)
	Dr. Allyn Fives Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway	Study of Young Carers in the Irish Population: Executive Summary
2011	Dr. Evelyn Mahon Department of Sociology, Trinity College, Dublin	Post-separation Parenting: A study of separation and divorce agreements made in the Family Law Circuit Courts of Ireland and their implications for parent-child contact and family lives
Ongoing research	Professor James Williams Economic and Social Research Institute	Growing up in Ireland – The National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland (see www.growingup.ie/)
	Dr. Paula Mayoock Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Initial stage of 3rd phase of longitudinal study of youth homelessness in Dublin
	Professor Robbie Gilligan Trinity College, Dublin	A follow-up study on the educational and social support experiences of young people in long-term foster care
	Dr. Shirley Martin University College, Cork	Young People as Social Actors: An examination of young people's perspectives on the impact of participation in DCYA initiatives*
	Professor Colette McAuley University College, Dublin	A review of the international literature on child protection and children in State care*
	Dr. Mairéad Seymour Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology	Identification and review of literature around participation experiences/ initiatives in the field of seldom-heard young people*

* Through the Research Development Initiative of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS).

APPENDIX 2: DCYA NATIONAL CHILDREN'S RESEARCH PROGRAMME – SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Year awarded	Fellowship Recipient and Institution	Title of study
2001	Caroline Smyth Department of Psychology, Trinity College, Dublin	Acculturation, adolescent mental health and youth suicide in modern Ireland
	Paula J. Manners Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Children's experiences of break-time in a primary school in Ireland
2002	Caroline Heary The Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Children's experiences of GP consultations: A child-centred perspective
	Aisling Parkes Faculty of Law, University College, Cork	The nature and scope of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the extent to which it has been implemented under international law
	Muireann Ní Raghallaigh School of Applied Social Science, University College, Dublin	Negotiating changed contexts and challenging circumstances: The experiences of unaccompanied minors living in Ireland
	Majella McSharry Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Schooled Bodies? Adolescents encountering complexities in the pursuit of embodied validation
2003	Margaret Kernan School of Education and Lifelong Learning, College of Human Sciences, University College, Dublin	The place of the outdoors in constructions of a 'good' childhood: An interdisciplinary study of outdoor provision in early childhood care and education in urban settings
	Veronica Lambert Nursing and Midwifery Department, Trinity College, Dublin	'Visible-ness': The nature of communication between children and health professionals in a specialist children's hospital in the Republic of Ireland: An ethnographic inquiry
	Morgan O'Brien Department of Psychology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Consuming Talk: Youth Culture and the Mobile Phone
	Deirdre Sharkey Department of Psychology, Faculty of Human Sciences, University College, Dublin	Understanding children's experiences of bullying in schools – A child-centred project
2004	Karen Smith School of Applied Social Science, University College, Dublin	Governing Young Citizens: Discourses of Childhood in Irish Social Policy
	Jean Henefer School of Information and Library Studies, University College, Dublin	The information worlds of ethnic minority adolescents in Ireland
	Margaret Rogers Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Social and Physical Ecologies of Childhood: A case study of children's perspectives on their neighbourhood
	Fiona Kelleher Department of Geography, University College, Cork	Place, Teenagers and Urban Identities: A new social geography of young people in Cork

2005	Eimear McMahon School of Psychology, University College, Dublin	An Evaluation of a Comprehensive Teen Parent Support Programme: Exploring mothers' views and experiences
	Mimi Tatlow-Golden School of Psychology, University College, Dublin	Who I Am: Exploring the nature and meaning of children's active and social selves
	Louise Herron Flynn Trinity College, Dublin	Education, Language and Disadvantage: The role of drama in education in the acquisition and development of pupils' language skills
2006	Ursula Hearne School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin	Using computers to promote creativity, learning strategies and problem-solving behaviours in children
	Carmel Smith Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin	Qualitative Research with Children: The Perspectives of Elite Researchers
2007	Elaine O'Callaghan Department of Law, University College, Cork	Children and Contact in the Private Family Law Setting: Resolving disputes in practice
	Suzanne Harkins Department of Sociology, Trinity College, Dublin	Food, Obesity and Families: Practices in Irish households with young children
	Danielle Cody Department of Applied Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology	Foster Care: A child-centred review
	Siobhan O'Higgins Department of Health Promotion, National University of Ireland, Galway	A participative approach to developing a resource for young people's sexual health promotion
2008	Ruth Davidson School of Psychology, College of Human Sciences, University College, Dublin	Child first, Sibling second: The experience of children who have a chronically ill brother or sister
	Deirdre McGillicuddy School of Education and Life Long Learning, University College, Dublin	A study of social inclusion and children's perspectives on the organisation of their learning in Irish primary schools
	Niamh Flanagan School of Applied Social Science, University College, Dublin	Towards an understanding of the information-seeking behaviour and research utilisation of social workers
	Nicola Duffy Department of Design and Creative Media, Letterkenny Institute of Technology	TACTIC: Teaching Autistic Children through Interactive Communication
2009	Eilís Hayes School of Nursing, Trinity College, Dublin	Feeling heard and validated: The voice of children's experience of self-harm and suicidal behaviour within the framework of their life stories
	A-M. McGovern Department of Education and Life Long Learning, University College, Dublin	The role of the home school partnership in the inclusion of immigrant children in Irish primary schools
	Lindsay Garrat School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College, Dublin	The influence of the body in migrant and indigenous boys' interactions within the masculine hierarchy of the school
	Elizabeth Mathews Geography Department, National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Mainstreaming of deaf education in Ireland

2010	Christine O'Farrelly School of Psychology, University College, Dublin	Examining the impact of transitions on children's adjustment in early childhood care and education settings
	Mark Candon School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin	DEIS in the Docklands: Will our lads ever get a good Leaving Certificate?
	Kathrina Swirak School of Applied Social Studies, University College, Cork	A post-structuralist deconstruction of Irish youth crime prevention policy with specific emphasis on the Garda Youth Diversion Projects
	Michelle Finnerty Department of Music, University College, Cork	Sounds from within: Exploring children's musical cultures in Ireland
2011	Mark Ward School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College, Dublin	A multilevel approach to understanding childhood overweight and obesity in Ireland: Informing the response to a growing epidemic
	Linda O'Keefe Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Sound and the Social Organisation of Space: The sound scape of youth
	Patricia Keilthy Department of Applied Social Science, University College, Dublin	The relationship between family inputs, State inputs and child outcomes: A comparison between Ireland and Denmark

APPENDIX 3: REVIEW OF NATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS TO INFORM NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DATA ON CHILDREN'S LIVES

Government Department/Agency	Policy document	Year published
Arts Council	Young People, Children and the Arts: Summary Policy Paper	2005
Crisis Pregnancy Agency	Strategy leading to an integrated approach to reducing crisis pregnancy, 2007-2011	2007
Department of Education and Science	Data Strategy, 2008-2010	2008
Department of Education and Science	Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy	2006
Department of Education and Science	The Home, School, Community Liaison Scheme in Ireland: From Vision to Best Practice, 2005-2006	2006
Department of Education and Science	The Report of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second-level Schools	2006
Department of Education and Science	DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools): An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion	2005
Department of Education and Science	Statement of Strategy, 2005-2007	2005
Department of Education and Science	Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second-level Schools, June 2005	2005
Department of Finance	The National Development Plan, 2007-2013. Transforming Ireland: A Better Quality of Life for All. Executive Summary	2007
Department of Health and Children	HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan, 2008-2012	2008
Department of Health and Children	Breastfeeding in Ireland: A five-year strategic action plan	2005
Department of Health and Children	The Report of the National Task Force on Obesity	2005
Department of Health and Children and Health Service Executive	Reach Out: National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention, 2005-2014	2005
Department of Health and Children	Review of the National Health Promotion Strategy	2004
Department of Health and Children	Strategic Task Force on Alcohol. Second Report	2004
Department of Health and Children	Working for Children and Families: Exploring good practice	2004
Department of Health and Children	Working Group on Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services, 2003	2003
Department of Health and Children	Traveller Health: A National Strategy, 2002-2005	2002
Department of Health and Children	Youth Homelessness Strategy	2001
Department of Health and Children	Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You	2001
Department of Health and Children	The National Health Promotion Strategy, 2000-2005	2000
Department of Health and Children	The National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives	2000
Department of Health and Children	Standardised Framework for Intercountry Adoption Assessment: Report of the Implementation Group	2000

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues	2006
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Expert Group on Children Detention Schools: First Progress Report to Mr. Brian Lenihan, TD, Minister for Children	2006
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Developing school-age childcare	2005
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	National Women's Strategy, 2007-2016	2005
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Planning for Diversity: The National Action Plan against Racism, 2005-2008	2005
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Report on the Youth Justice Review, 2005	2005
Department of Social and Family Affairs	Proposals for supporting Lone Parents – Discussion document	2006
Department of Social and Family Affairs	Data and Statistics Strategy	2005
Department of Social and Family Affairs	Outline Sector Plan under the Disability Bill	2004
Department of the Taoiseach	An Agreed Programme for Government: A Blueprint for Ireland's Future, 2007-2012	2007
Department of the Taoiseach	Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement, 2006-2015	2006
Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation	National Drugs Strategy, 2001-2008: Building on Experience	2001
Expert Group on Future Skills Needs	Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy, 5th Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs	2007
Health Service Executive	Best Health for Children: Revisited Report from the National Core Child Health	2005
National Children's Office	Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy	2004
National Educational Welfare Board	Every Day Counts: The National Educational Welfare Board Strategic Plan, 2005-2007	2005
Office for Social Inclusion	National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007-2016	2007
Office for Social Inclusion	National Report for Ireland on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion, 2006-2008	2006
Office for Social Inclusion	Building an Inclusive Society, 2002-2007	2002
Office of the Minister for Children	Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People	2007
Office of the Minister for Children and Department of Health and Children	The Agenda for Children's Services: A Policy Handbook	2007
Office of the Minister for Children and Department of Health and Children	National Childcare Strategy, 2006-2010: A Guide for Parents/Providers	2006
Probation Service	Strategy Statement, 2008-2010	2008
Road Safety Authority	Road Safety Strategy, 2007-2012	2007
Task Force on Active Citizenship	Report on Active Citizenship: Consultation Process	2006

APPENDIX 4: ONLINE CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

National Data Strategy on Children's Lives: Consultation Questionnaire



The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is currently developing a National Data Strategy on Children's Lives. This strategy will set out the vision, goals, principles and actions to guide and support the collection, compilation and dissemination of data, statistics and research on children and will facilitate the utilisation of good quality, easily accessible, internationally comparable information about children in Ireland.

As part of the process of developing a National Data Strategy we are conducting this consultation which seeks to add to the evidence base which will underpin the strategy. This questionnaire has been designed to allow those using or providing data, statistics or research on children to express their views, comments and suggestions for the Data Strategy. The instructions for completing the questionnaire are given below. The focus of this consultation is to obtain a broad overview of current and emerging issues around data on children. We are not asking for an inventory of all of the data you use/produce but rather for an overview of the role of data, research and statistics on children in your work. By completing this questionnaire you are contributing to a strategic plan for better information on the lives of children in Ireland. Please answer the questions below as fully as possible. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Please provide the following details:

Name: _____

Organisation (if any): _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Is this a: Government Department Academic
 State Agency NGO
 Other _____

Brief description of function of organisation: _____

Are you responding: On behalf of your organisation
 On an individual basis

How to complete this questionnaire:

All respondents please answer the section 'Looking to the Future' below.

Then if you consider your organisation is:

Mainly a **producer** of data, statistics or research, please complete the '**Producers of Data, Statistics or Research**' section.

Mainly a **user** of data, statistics or research, please complete the '**Users of Data, Statistics or Research**' section.

Both a user and producer of data, statistics or research, please complete **both of these sections**.

Looking to the Future

LF 1: Can you give a brief description of how you would like to see data on children's lives in Ireland develop over the next 10 years?

LF 2: Can you identify 3 priority areas for research on children's lives in the next decade?

- i) _____
ii) _____
iii) _____

Click 'next' below to move to the next page

Producers of data, statistics or research

P 1: What data on children does your organisation currently produce?
(please just give an overview, not detailed descriptions of individual data sources)

a) for use at national level _____

 b) for use at international level _____

P 2: Do you use any of the following methods to disseminate your data? Tick all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internally within your organisation, through regular bulletins | <input type="checkbox"/> Externally through ad hoc publications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internally through ad hoc bulletins | <input type="checkbox"/> Externally on the web |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internally via regular queries | <input type="checkbox"/> Externally via regular queries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internally via ad hoc queries | <input type="checkbox"/> Externally via ad hoc queries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Externally to other organisations through a regular publication schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> No dissemination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

P 3: Are there changes you feel could be made to the data you produce to add value or maximise the potential of this data or to improve quality/ level of data provision for your users?

P 4: Is your organisation currently developing new data sources on children, making changes to existing sources or planning such developments? If so please give a brief description of these changes or developments (planned or current) over the following time periods:

Currently in progress: _____

 Planned to take place within the next year _____

 Planned to take place within the next 1-4 years _____

 Planned to take place within the next 5-10 years _____

P 5: Do you currently have the capacity to fully exploit the potential of the data you collect? Yes
 No

If no, what would be required for this to be achieved?

Click 'next' below to move to the next page or 'back' below to return to the previous page

Users of data, statistics or research

U 1: What data on children does your organisation currently use? Please just give an overview, not detailed descriptions of individual data sources.

U 2: What purpose(s) is this data used for and how important is it to the work of your organisation e.g. does it enable you to meet a policy requirement, a KPI, legal reporting requirements, an international reporting requirement, to plan service delivery etc.?

U 3: Does this work result in outputs, (e.g. publications, internal reports, web-based reports) which are disseminated? If so please indicate the form these outputs take.

U4: In your opinion, does this data fully meet your requirements? Yes
 No

Specifically:

Are there any issues with quality in the data that you use - accuracy, timeliness, frequency, level of disaggregation available, ease/speed of access?

Do you have any unmet data needs - what are the gaps in the data being provided to you?

Are there any other changes that could be made to this data which would increase its value to you?

U 5: Are you aware of any changes or developments being implemented in the data sources you use? If so please give a brief description of these changes or developments (planned or current).

Thank you for your time and assistance

Please click on 'submit' below to submit the questionnaire and click OK in the box that appears.

Once your questionnaire is successfully submitted, you will see a 'thank you' message on screen, if you do not see this your questionnaire has not been submitted.

APPENDIX 5: RESPONDENTS TO ONLINE CONSULTATION

There were 196 responses received to the public consultation to inform this strategy. Of these, 6 were from private individuals or unidentifiable, 135 were on behalf of organisations and the remaining 55 were from individuals working in a range of organisations.

Organisational responses were received from:

Alcohol Action Ireland
AMEN
Arts Council
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)
Asthma Society of Ireland
Barnardos
Bunclody Vocational College
Callan Community Network Ltd.
Carers Association
Caring for Carers Ireland
Carlow VEC
Central Statistics Office (CSO)
Chester Beatty Library
Childminding Ireland
Children Acts Advisory Board
Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI) Foundation
Children's Books Ireland (CBI)
Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin
Children's Rights Alliance
City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB)
Clare County Childcare Committee
Coeliac Society of Ireland
Coláiste Abbain
Combat Poverty Agency
COPE Galway
County Cork VEC
County Dublin VEC
Courts Service of Ireland
Crafts Council of Ireland
Create
Crisis Pregnancy Agency
Crosscare Young Adult Support Service
Cúram
Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland
Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
Dental Health Foundation
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Department of Education and Science
Department of Health and Children, Social Inclusion Unit
Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform
Dodder Valley Partnership
Drug Treatment Centre Board (DTCB)
Dublin City Council
Dublin City Council, Culture, Recreation and Amenity Department
Dublin Transportation Office (DTO)
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Childcare Committee
Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)

Equality Authority (An Túdarás Comhionannais)
 Family Support Agency
 Fingal County Childcare Committee
 Fingal County Council
 Focus Ireland
 Forensic Science Laboratory
 Galway City and County Childcare Committee
 Galway City Partnership
 Galway County Council
 Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN)
 General Register Office
 Headway
 Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
 Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)
 Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
 Health Research Board (HRB)
 Health Service Executive
 Health Service Executive, Children and Family Services, Social Work Service
 Health Service Executive, Disability Services
 Health Service Executive, Youth Drugs and Alcohol Service
 Health Service Executive, Local Health Office, Psychology Service
 Health Service Executive, Childcare Directorate, Limerick
 Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)
 Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)
 Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH)
 International Adoption Association (IAA)
 Irish Association of Young People in Care (IAYPIC)
 Irish Childcare Policy Network (ICPN)
 Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health
 Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)
 Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA)
 Irish Mental Patients' Educational and Representative Organisation (IMPERO)
 Irish Osteoporosis Society (IOS)
 Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA)
 Irish Sports Council
 Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association (ISKA)
 Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS)
 Katharine Howard Foundation
 Library Association of Ireland (Cumann Leabharlann na hÉireann)
 Library Council
 Limerick City Children's Services Committee
 Longford County Childcare Committee
 Lucca Leadership
 Mayo County Childcare Committee
 Mental Health Commission
 Monaghan County Childcare Committee
 Music Network Ltd.
 My Time After School Childcare, Hospital Family Resource Centre
 National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) (An Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh)
 National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD)
 National Association for Youth Drama (NAYD)
 National Children's Nurseries Association (NCNA)
 National Disability Authority (NDA) (Údarás Náisiúnta Michumais)
 National Federation of Arch Clubs
 National Gallery of Ireland (Gailearáí Náisiúnta na hÉireann)
 National Nutrition Surveillance Centre (NNSC)
 New Communities Partnership (NCP)
 No Name Club Ltd.

North Tipperary County Childcare Committee
 One Family
 Order of Malta Ireland
 PACE
 Probation Service
 Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
 Road Safety Authority (RSA)
 Roscommon County Council
 Rotunda Hospital
 Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
 Sligo County Childcare Committee
 South Dublin Children's Services Committee
 South Tipperary County Childcare Committee
 South Tipperary County Council
 Teach Oscail FRC Project
 Tourette Syndrome Association of Ireland (TSAI)
 University College Cork (UCC)
 Waterford County Childcare Committee Ltd.
 Waterford County Council Library Service
 Waterford Museum of Treasures
 Wexford County Childcare Committee
 Wexford County Council Public Library Service
 Young Men's Catholic Association (YMCA)

Responses were received from 55 individuals working in the following organisations:

Broadford Montessori Pre-School
 Central Statistics Office (CSO)
 Comhairle Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Teo
 Cork Institute of Technology
 Cork University Hospital
 Department of Health and Children (An Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí)
 Dublin Institute of Technology
 Geary Institute, UCD
 Health Research Board (HRB)
 Health Service Executive (HSE)
 Higher Education and Training Awards Council
 Homeless Agency
 Irish Refugee Council
 Laois County Council
 Liberty Steiner/Waldorf Initiative
 Mercy University Hospital, Cork
 National Disability Authority (NDA) (Údarás Náisiúnta Michumais)
 National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street
 National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway)
 Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA)
 Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Dublin
 Road Safety Authority (RSA)
 Trinity College, Dublin (TCD), Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics
 Trinity College, Dublin (TCD), Children's Research Centre
 University College, Dublin (UCD), School of Applied Social Science
 University College, Dublin (UCD), School of Medicine and Medical Science
 University College, Dublin (UCD), School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems
 University College, Dublin (UCD), Social Science Research Centre
 University Hospital, Galway
 Westmeath VEC

APPENDIX 6: INVENTORY OF DATA SOURCES

All-Ireland Survey of Breathing Problems and Related Disorders
 Annual Beneficiary Questionnaire
 Annual Return for Private Schools (Infant, Junior and Preparatory)
 Annual Return for School (Early Start Pre-School Programme)
 Annual Return for School (Primary - Integrated)
 Annual Return for School (Primary)
 Annual Return for School (Primary) Special Class Teacher
 Annual Return for School (Primary) Special Schools
 Annual Return for School (Primary) Traveller Children
 Annual School Leaver's Survey
 Application for Housing Accommodation
 Application form Additional Child One-Parent Family Payment (OFP38)
 Application form for Adoptive Benefit (AB1)
 Application form for Child Benefit (CB1)
 Application form for Child Benefit (CB2)
 Application form for Maternity Benefit (MB10)
 Application form for One-Parent Family Payment (OFP1)
 Avian Influenza Case Surveillance: Report of Possible, Probable or Confirmed Case of Influenza A
 Bacterial Meningitis/Invasive Meningococcal Disease Notification Form
 Birth Registration
 Census of the Population of Ireland
 Child Benefit: Report of events that may affect your claim (CB56)
 Childcare Interim Dataset
 Cystic Fibrosis Annual Assessment
 Cystic Fibrosis Registration and Diagnosis Form
 DEIS Achievements and attitudes in primary schools (2nd class): Pupil Questionnaire
 DEIS Achievements and attitudes in primary schools (2nd, 3rd and 6th classes): Pupil Rating Form by Teacher
 DEIS Achievements and attitudes in primary schools (2nd, 3rd, 6th classes): Parent Questionnaire
 DEIS Achievements and attitudes in primary schools (3rd and 6th classes): Pupil Questionnaire
 DEIS: What students think (1st year): Pupil Questionnaire
 DEIS: What students think (5th year): Pupil Questionnaire
 Death Registration
 Domestic adoptions
 EU-SILC
 EUROCAT Registry
 Enhanced Surveillance Form for Hepatitis B
 Enhanced Malaria Surveillance
 Enhanced Surveillance Form for Influenza in 0 - 14 year olds
 Enhanced Surveillance Form for Suspected or Confirmed Cases of Leptospirosis
 Enhanced Surveillance Form for Syphilis in Ireland
 Enhanced Surveillance on Invasive Meningococcal Disease in Ireland: Cluster Form
 Enteric, Foodborne and Waterborne Outbreak Report
 Equal Access
 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs: Student Questionnaire
 FÁS Participants, Follow-up Survey
 FÁS Registration Form
 General Outbreak Reporting Form – Preliminary Information
 Guardian's Payment (Contributory) or (Non-Contributory) (GP1)
 HEA Course File
 HEA Programme File
 HEA Survey File
 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC): Student Questionnaire (General)
 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC): Student Questionnaire (Middle Childhood)
 Hospital In-Patient Enquiry Summary Sheet

Household Budget Survey: Household Questionnaire
 Housing Needs Assessment, Variables and Application for Housing Accommodation
 Infectious Disease Notifications (suggested data items for labs to report to Public Health)
 Inter-country adoptions
 Invasive Group A Streptococcal (iGAS) Infection Enhanced Data Form
 Juvenile Liaison Office Suitability Report on Child for Inclusion in Diversion Programme
 Juvenile Referral Form
 Listeriosis Surveillance Questionnaire: Form A: Adult/Juvenile Cases
 Listeriosis Surveillance Questionnaire: Form B: Pregnancy related and/or Neonatal Cases
 Measles Enhanced Surveillance Form
 Mumps Enhanced Surveillance Form
 National Assessment of English Reading: 1st Class: Parent/ Guardian Questionnaire
 National Assessment of English Reading: 1st Class: Pupil Questionnaire
 National Assessment of English Reading: 1st Class: Pupil Rating Form by Teacher
 National Assessment of English Reading: 1st Class: Teacher Questionnaire
 National Assessment of English Reading: 5th Class: Parent/ Guardian Questionnaire
 National Assessment of English Reading: 5th Class: Pupil Questionnaire
 National Assessment of English Reading: 5th Class: Pupil Rating Form by Teacher
 National Assessment of English Reading: 5th Class: Teacher Questionnaire
 National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics: Inspectors Questionnaire
 National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics: Learning-Support Teacher
 Questionnaire
 National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics: School Questionnaire
 National Assessments of Mathematics: 4th Class: Parents/Guardian Questionnaire
 National Assessments of Mathematics: 4th Class: Pupil Questionnaire
 National Assessments of Mathematics: 4th Class: Pupil Rating Form by Teacher
 National Assessments of Mathematics: 4th Class: Teacher Questionnaire
 National Cancer Registry
 National Disability Survey: Child Questionnaire
 National Drug Treatment Reporting System
 National House Condition Survey
 National Intellectual Disability Database
 National Perinatal Reporting System
 National Physical and Sensory Disability Database
 National Psychiatric In-Patient Reporting System
 National Psychiatric In-Patient Reporting System: Hospital Census
 National Registry of Deliberate Self-Harm
 National Sudden Infant Death Register
 National Tuberculosis Notification Form
 Notification of Infectious Diseases
 Notification to the Mental Health Commission of the admission of a child to an approved
 centre for adults
 Notification to the Mental Health Commission of the discharge of a child from an approved
 centre for adults
 Patient Treatment Register
 Poisons Information Centre Database
 Post-Primary Pupil Database
 Post-Primary Student Absence Report
 Primary Student Absence Report
 Programme for International Student Assessment: School Questionnaire
 Programme for International Student Assessment: Student Questionnaire
 Programme for International Student Assessment: Teacher Questionnaire
 Quarterly National Household Survey
 Refugee Application Form
 Register of Foreign Adoptions
 SIDS Case questionnaire
 SLÁN

Still Birth Registration
Surveillance Form for Invasive Haemophilus influenzae
Surveillance Scheme for Legionnaires' Disease
Survey of Parents using Childcare Services
Survey on Homelessness
Tetanus Enhanced Surveillance Form
Unaccompanied Minors Referral Form
VTEC Enhanced Surveillance Report Form

APPENDIX 7: CONSULTATIONS CONDUCTED WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE OMCYA/DCYA PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

Year	Subject of consultation
2004	Development of the Children's Code of Advertising
2005	Development of the National Recreation Policy
2005	Development of a national set of child well-being indicators
2006	Development of the Strategy Task Force on Active Citizenship
2006	The age of consent for sexual activity
2007	Development of the Irish Youth Justice Strategy
2007	Misuse of alcohol among young people
2008	Teenage Mental Health: What helps and what hurts
2010	Consultations with children and young people in the care of the State
2010	Junior Cycle in second-level schools
2010	White Paper on Crime

APPENDIX 8: NATIONAL STATISTICS BOARD'S (2004) BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DATA STRATEGY

Guideline 1

Each department should establish a Data Strategy Committee comprising data users (including appropriate outside experts and data users) and data producers to design and deliver its data strategy.

Guideline 2

Each department should include its data/statistics strategy in its periodic Statement of Strategy and comment on progress in its annual report.

Guideline 3

Departments' Data Strategy Committees should identify the key policy areas where their department requires statistical information for making and monitoring policy. The Management Advisory Committee within each department should be represented in this process to ensure that the identification of data needs is both comprehensive and strategic.

Guideline 4

Departments should identify their important data needs within each key policy area. These needs should include the key statistical indicators by which a department will evaluate the effectiveness of its policies. The needs of key users of the department's statistical information should be identified.

Guideline 5

Departments should identify the data holdings available internally (including agencies and other bodies acting on behalf of the department) that could contribute to meeting the department's policy data needs.

Guideline 6

Departments should identify the external data holdings that could contribute to meeting the department's unmet policy data needs.

Guideline 7

Departments should prioritise their policy data needs that have not been met through either existing internal or external data holdings. The statistics network proposed by the NSB [National Statistics Board] should examine how official data holdings could be developed to meet these needs.

Guideline 8

Departments should ensure that related data sources are capable of being integrated at the individual record level. The increased use of the Personal Public Service Number within data holdings in Government departments is of central importance in this context.

Guideline 9

The CSO [Central Statistics Office] should assist individual departments to further develop the statistical competence of their staff.

Guideline 10

The CSO should work with departments to develop a core set of demographic and socio-economic variables. These could either be independently collected in administrative schemes and surveys, or preferably, subject to meeting data protection restrictions, collected via a central repository such as the Department of Social and Family Affairs' Central Records System database.

Guideline 11

The CSO and departments should ensure that the wording of the questions used to collect the core information is expressed in a consistent manner across all schemes and surveys.

Guideline 12

Departments should consult with the CSO to ensure that common classifications and coding systems are used as much as possible throughout their data holdings. The increased use of consistent, small-area geo-coding and grid coordinates point coding is required to facilitate comprehensive spatial analyses.

APPENDIX 9: RESEARCH AND DATA STRATEGY STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Chairpersons

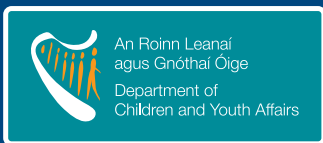
Ms. Mary Doyle, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2010-2011)

Ms. Sylva Langford, Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2008-2009)

Ms. Bairbre Nic Aonghusa, Office of the Minister for Children (2007)

Organisation	Representative
Research Unit, Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Dr. Sinéad Hanafin, Head of Research Ms. Anne-Marie Brooks Ms. Bairbre Meaney Ms. Gillian Roche (2009-2011)
Early Years Education Unit, Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Ms. Catherine Hynes Ms. Theresa Ryan
Child Welfare and Protection Policy Unit, Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	Mr. Charlie Hardy (2007- 2009)
Department of Health	Mr. Alan Cahill Ms. Elaine O'Sullivan
Irish Youth Justice Service*	Mr. Barry O'Connor (2007-2008) Ms. Nicola Murphy (2009-2010) Mr. John Cole Ms. Pauline Waters
Youth Justice Unit, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Mr. Gavin McDonagh (2007-2008) Ms. Sandra Smyth (2007-2008)
Office for Social Inclusion/Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Social Protection	Mr. Eamon Moran (2008-2009) Mr. Aonghus Horgan (2009-2010) Dr. Kasey Treadwell Shine Ms. Joanne Mulholland
Department of Education and Skills	Mr. Tom Healy
Health Service Executive*	Ms. Cate Hartigan (2007) Mr. Barry McGinn (2008-2009) Mr. John McCusker
Central Statistics Office	Mr. Gerry O'Hanlon (2007) Mr. Gerry Brady (2007-2009) Mr. John Dunne
The Atlantic Philanthropies	Mr. Tom Costello (2007-2010) Ms. Jane Forman
National University of Ireland, Galway*	Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn

* Represented by alternates at certain meetings



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