



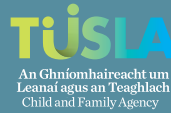
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Parenting Support and Parental Participation

Report of the Parenting Support Champions Regional Learning Group

BY
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UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

JULY 2017

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The Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention Partnership and Family Support



The research and evaluation team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway provides research, evaluation and technical support to Tusla's Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS). This is a new programme of action being undertaken by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency as part of its National Service Delivery Framework. The programme seeks to transform child and family services in Ireland by embedding prevention and early intervention into the culture and operations of Tusla. The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre's work focuses on research and evaluation on the implementation and the outcomes of Tusla's Development and Mainstreaming Programme and is underpinned by the overarching research question:

... whether the organisational culture and practice at Tusla and its services are integrated, preventative, evidence informed and inclusive of children and parents and if so, is this contributing to improved outcomes for children and their families.

The research and evaluation study is underpinned by the Work Package approach. This has been adopted to deliver a comprehensive suite of research and evaluation activities involving sub-studies of the main areas within the Tusla Development and Mainstreaming Programme. The work packages are : Meitheal and Child and Family Support Networks, Children's Participation, Parenting Support and Parental Participation, Public Awareness and Commissioning.

This publication is part of the Parenting Support and Parental Participation Work Package

About the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre

The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UCFRC) is part of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society at the National University of Ireland. Founded in 2007, through support from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Health Services Executive, with a base in the School of Political Science and Sociology, the mission of the Centre is to help create the conditions for excellent policies, services and practices that improve the lives of children, youth and families through research, education and service development. The UCFRC has an extensive network of relationships and research collaborations internationally and is widely recognised for its core expertise in the areas of Family Support and Youth Development.

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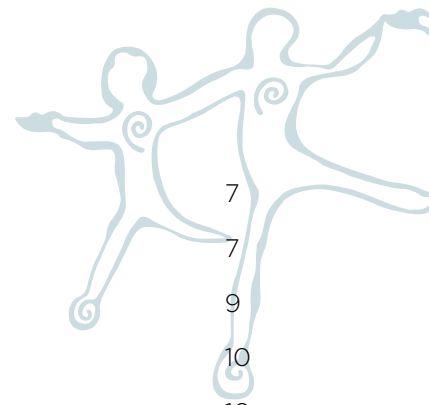
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1

1. Introduction

This research is part of a study to examine the process, implementation and outcomes of the Parenting Support Champions Project, which is one element of the Parenting Support and Parental Participation work stream. This research is part of a wider programme of work to research and evaluate Tusla's Development and Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support being undertaken by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in the National University of Ireland, Galway.

The purpose of this report is to outline the experiences of the Parenting Support Champions (PSCs) who attended the PSC Regional Learning Groups (RLGs). RLGs have been set up by Tusla to support PSCs in their role. The aims of the RLGs are to create opportunities for learning through peer engagement, to build the capacity of the PSCs to support parenting by recognising best practice in parenting support, to enhance parental participation practices, and to develop reflective practice by sharing pertinent information and resources.

Questions for the RLGs pertained to what respondents hoped to gain from the RLGs, whether participation in the RLG supported them to develop their role as a PSC, and whether knowledge gained from the RLG will be beneficial and applicable to practice work. Respondents were also asked for suggestions and ideas for the next round of RLGs and were given an opportunity to provide other comments should they wish to do so.

Answers were provided via a questionnaire distributed at each of the RLGs which took place at five venues around the country in May 2017. They contribute to the process, implementation and outcomes study of the PSC project, informing in a formative way the development of activities in this area. For the purposes of this report, responses are divided into each of Tusla's four regional areas.

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2. Description of Participants

This section describes the respondents in terms of their employment profile, their geographical location, the length of time spent in their specific area of work, and their gender profile.

2.1 Employment Profile of Respondents

The RLG questionnaire was completed by 62 respondents, including 59 who described themselves as PSCs, one Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) manager, one Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) coordinator and one Regional Implementation Manager (RIM). The regional breakdown of the respondents is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Region	PSCs	Other
Dublin North East	8	1
Dublin Mid Leinster	8	1
South	15	1
West	28	-
Total	59	3

2.1.2 Length of Time in Role

In order to ascertain the level of experience that the respondents have in their area of work, they were asked to indicate the length of time they are employed in their role. This varied, with 11.3% of respondents being less than a year in the role and 41.9% employed for over ten years in their role.

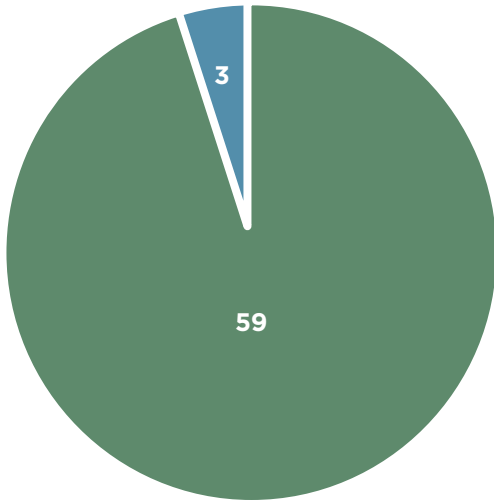
Table 2: Length of time in role

Length of Time in Role	Dublin North East	Dublin Mid-Leinster	South	West	% of Respondents ¹
< 1 year	1	-	1	5	11.3%
1-4 years	3	3	7	5	29%
5-9 years	1	-	2	4	11.3%
10-19 years	4	4	5	12	40.3%
20+ years	-	2	-	1	4.8%
No answer	-	-	1	1	3.2%
Total:	9	9	16	28	100%

¹ All percentages are rounded off to the nearest digit.

2.1.3 Gender

The gender profile comprised 59 female and three male respondents.



■ Male ■ Female

Figure 1: Gender of respondents

3



3. Learning from the Parent Support Champions Regional Learning Group

This section outlines the respondents' views of the learning they gained from participation in the RLG. Specific focus is on views of what they hoped to gain from the RLG, how participation in the RLG supported them in developing their role as a PSC, and how knowledge gained would benefit PSCs in their practice.

3.1 Hoped to Gain from Participating in the RLG

Dublin North East

For those who participated in the Dublin North East RLG, the most prominent area of interest was sharing information generally and gaining information on what other areas are doing in parenting support (33.3%) and carrying out the role of PSC. Networking (11.1%) and information on future planning (16.6%) were also identified as areas of interest to respondents.

Table 3: What respondents hoped to gain from RLG (DNE)

Areas of Interest	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	6	33.3%
Networking	2	11.1%
Support on a PS implementation strategy	2	11.1%
Future planning and development of next stages	3	16.6%
Understand the message that Tusla want to give	1	5.5%
Clarity regarding PSC role and Tusla's expectations of PSCs	1	5.5%
Getting support	1	5.5%
To gain information about what the local structure is	1	5.5%
To find out who is going to drive this	1	5.5%
Total	18	100%

Dublin Mid-Leinster

As with Dublin North East, the sharing of information and gaining information on what other areas are doing was the most prominent area of interest for the respondents (53.3%). Future planning was an area of focus for some (20%).

Table 4: What respondents hoped to gain from RLG (DML)

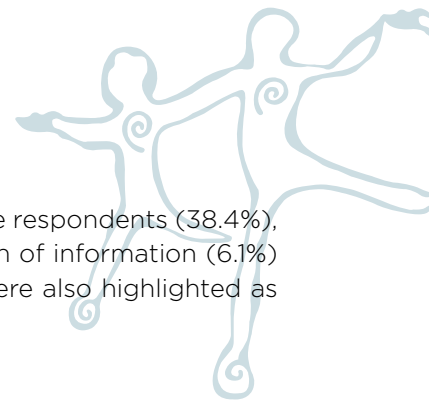
Areas of Interest	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	8	53.3%
Future planning and development of next stages	3	20%
Clarity regarding PSC role	2	13.3%
Ideas to take back for use in local area	2	13.3%
Total	15	100%

South

As with Dublin North East and Dublin Mid-Leinster, respondents from the South region identified gaining information from other areas as a top area of interest (28.5%). Clarity on the PSC role (20%) and information on disseminating key messages were also identified as areas of interest (8.5%).

Table 5: What respondents hoped to gain from RLG (South)

Areas of Interest	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	10	28.5%
Clarity regarding PSC role	7	20%
Clarity regarding national vision for PSC Project	1	2.8%
Future planning and development of next stages	2	5.7%
Ideas on how to incorporate PSC with current role	2	5.7%
Networking	3	8.5%
Peer support	1	2.8%
Best practice (delivering evidence-based programmes and practice)	2	5.7%
Disseminating key messages	3	8.5%
Assess progress to date	2	5.7%
Identify gaps/barriers/issues	1	2.8%
Understanding of family and parent support and how it connects to PSCs	1	2.8%
Total	35	100%



West

While gaining information from other areas was an area of interest for some of the respondents (38.4%), and clarity of the role of the PSC was a concern for others (13.8%), dissemination of information (6.1%) and clarity regarding the application of the parenting support strategy (6.1%) were also highlighted as areas of interest.

Table 6: What respondents hoped to gain from RLG (West)

Areas of Interest	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	25	38.4%
Clarity regarding PSC role	9	13.8%
Future planning and development of next stages	2	3.07%
Networking	9	13.8%
Who to contact to progress role	1	1.5%
Clarification re application of strategy	4	6.1%
Dissemination of information to team/colleagues	4	6.1%
Learn how to reach seldom-heard parents	1	1.5%
Get motivated	1	1.5%
Dissemination of information to service users	1	1.5%
Finding out how other models of participation being used	1	1.5%
National model/development of PSC programme	1	1.5%
Opportunities to collaborate	1	1.5%
Find out how models of participation are being used	1	1.5%
Part of something bigger	1	1.5%
New ideas to enhance practice	2	3.07%
National model – development of PSC programme	1	1.5%
Total	65	100%

3.2 Did participation in the Regional Learning Group support you to develop your role as a Parenting Support Champion?

Respondents were asked to indicate whether participation in the RLG supported them to develop their role as a Parenting Support Champion. The majority (57) answered that it did.

Table 7: Participation in RLG supporting PSCs to develop their roles

Region	Yes	No	No Answer	Not Applicable
Dublin North East	6	-	2	1
Dublin Mid-Leinster	8	-	-	1
South	15	-	-	1
West	28	-	-	-
Total	57	-	2	3

Did participation in RLG support to develop PSC role

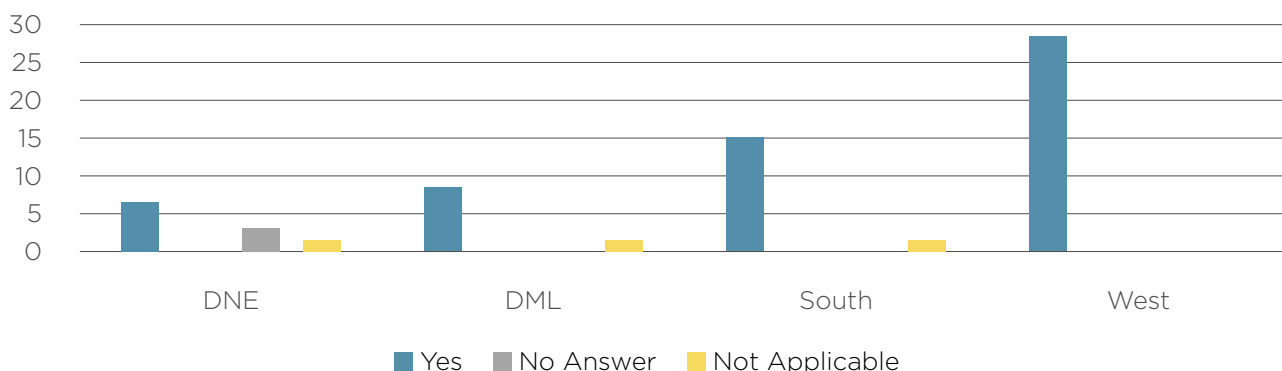


Figure 2: RLGs supporting PSCs to develop their roles

Those who said participation in the RLG supported them to develop their role as a PSC were asked to comment on how. The following section outlines responses by region.

Dublin North East

The majority of responses from Dublin North East indicated that it was the sharing and gaining of information on what was occurring in other areas that most supported them to develop their role as a PSC (56.25%). For others it was the positivity and energy from the RLG that supported them (18.75%).

Table 8: How RLGs supported PSCs to develop their role (DNE)

Areas of Support	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	9	56.25%
Energising/Positive/inclusive environment	3	18.75%
Networking	1	6.25%
Identifying gaps/barriers/issues ²	2	12.5%
Focus on 7 key messages and the role of the PSC	1	6.25%
Total	16	100%

Dublin Mid Leinster

As with Dublin North East, the sharing and gaining of information supported Dublin Mid-Leinster respondents most in developing their PSC roles (50%). For others, the clarity they gained on the role of the PSC was most useful in developing their roles (16.6%).

² Particular mention was given to having difficulties when there is no local area strategy in place.

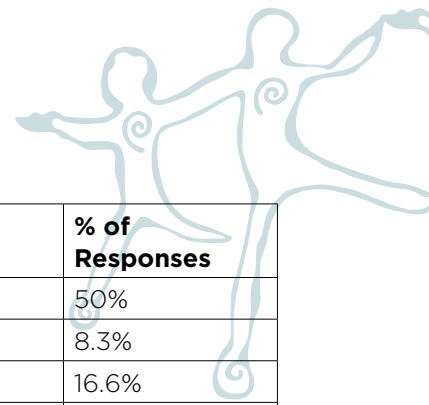


Table 9: How RLGs supported PSCs to develop their role (DML)

Areas of Support	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	6	50%
Improved PSC group cohesion	1	8.3%
Clarity regarding PSC role	2	16.6%
Next steps/Planning	1	8.3%
Disseminate information more effectively	1	8.3%
Networking	1	8.3%
Total	12	100%

South

For respondents in the South region, while gaining information from other areas (27.5%) and gaining clarity around the role of the PSC (20.6%) were most helpful in developing their own role, information on next steps and planning were also identified as helpful in supporting respondents to develop their roles (17.2%).

Table 10: How RLGs supported PSCs to develop their role (South)

Areas of Support	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	8	27.5%
Clarity regarding PSC role	6	20.6%
Next steps/Planning	5	17.2%
Networking	2	6.9%
More awareness of supporting parents/families and young people	1	3.5%
New ways of working to promote parenting	1	3.5%
Now know how I can feed into PPFS and CYSPC	1	3.5%
Know how much I have time for PSC role	1	3.5%
Identified the need to spread communication across local area	1	3.5%
New resources	1	3.5%
Got ideas for how to promote parenting 24/7	1	3.5%
Clarified that work in own area is disjointed and a lot of work is required	1	3.5%
Total	29	100%

West

While gaining information (25%) and information on planning (14.3%) were seen as helpful for respondents in the West, a number of other areas of learning were also deemed useful by respondents; for example, identifying gaps, barriers and issues (5.3%) and information on how to disseminate information to service users (3.5%) and colleagues (1.7%).

Table 11: How RLGs supported PSCs to develop their role (West)

Areas of Support	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing/Gaining information from other areas	14	25%
Clarity regarding role	7	12.5%
Next steps/Planning	8	14.3%
Begin to identify lead person	1	1.7%
Create an understanding with managers re management and time needed	1	1.7%
Outcomes slide highlighted term goal	1	1.7%
Motivated	3	5.3%
See how important the parent is	1	1.7%
Disseminating information to service users	2	3.5%
Disseminating information to teams/colleagues	1	1.7%
Discussion with line manager about role/leadership	1	1.7%
Networking	1	1.7%
More clarity regarding timeline	1	1.7%
Identify gaps/barriers/issues	3	5.3%
Identify strengths/benefits	2	3.5%
Good to have a specific forum to discuss PSC	1	1.7%
Understanding on how to promote 24/7	2	3.5%
Know where to go for new ideas or build on existing ideas	1	1.7%
Provide a further discussion at local level PSC planning level	1	1.7%
Being part of a group locally, regionally, nationally	1	1.7%
Increased use of resources/tool kits	2	3.5%
New ideas to support to parents/families	1	1.7%
Total	56	100%



3.3 How will knowledge gained in RLG benefit practice

There were mixed views on how knowledge gained from the RLGs could benefit respondents in their practice work.

Dublin North East

Respondents in Dublin North East maintained that knowledge gained in the RLG would enhance their practice and that of others in their area through using the ideas discussed to improve their roles (33.3%). Others specified that their practice would be improved by being motivated to engage others (16.6%) and that knowledge gained was useful for planning next steps and planning with others to achieve goals (16.6%).

Table 12: How knowledge gained in RLGs will benefit practice (DNE)

Benefit to Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Motivated/Encouraged to engage others	2	16.6%
Gained support from others	1	8.3%
Helped to develop service specific parenting support programme	1	8.3%
Ideas on how to train staff in programme	1	8.3%
Developed awareness of pitfalls	1	8.3%
Assisted in next steps/Planning	2	16.6%
Enhancing own practice and practice of others in the area	4	33.3%
Total	12	100%

Dublin Mid-Leinster

As with Dublin North East, respondents in Dublin Mid-Leinster maintained that practice would be enhanced through knowledge gained in the area of planning (16.6%). Support on signposting for parents and other professionals was also seen as a benefit to practice (16.6%).

Table 13: How knowledge gained in RLGs will benefit practice (DML)

Benefit to practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Disseminate information to colleagues	1	8.3%
Disseminate information to service users	1	8.3%
Next steps/Planning	2	16.6%
Clarity regarding role	1	8.3%
Some different ideas like PSC leaflet	1	8.3%
Interested that PSC sit on CYPSC subcommittees	1	8.3%
Signposting courses for parents and other professionals	2	16.6%
Promotion in centres	1	8.3%
Support with mapping	1	8.3%
Help to be creative in fitting new ideas into area and specific role	1	8.3%
Total	12	100%

South

Among respondents in the South region, 22.2% said they had increased confidence in their role of PSC as a result of participating in the RLG, and that this would benefit their practice. For others (18.5%) it is the knowledge gained in terms of getting good ideas from other areas that would be of benefit to practice.

Table 14: How knowledge gained in RLGs will benefit practice (South)

Benefit to practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Adds value to role	1	3.7%
More confident in disseminating information	4	14.8%
Sharing information/Gaining information from other areas (good ideas)	5	18.5%
Validation regarding role (doing OK)	2	7.4%
Confident in other support services that exist	1	3.7%
Next steps/Planning	3	11.1%
Motivated/Encouraged (increased confidence in role)	6	22.2%
Wide support network	1	3.7%
Will feed back to line manager and see how much time I can give	1	3.7%
It is an extra resource to my work	1	3.7%
It will encourage me to get the voice of children and parents heard	1	3.7%
Enabled to support parents better	1	3.7%
Total	27	100%

West



There were a variety of views from the West region on how knowledge gained from RLGs will benefit practice. For some, information on planning will be of benefit (12.2%). For others, disseminating information gained to colleagues will benefit practice in the wider sphere (12.2%).

Table 15: How knowledge gained in RLGs will benefit practice (West)

Benefit to Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Sharing information/Gaining Information from other areas (good ideas)	4	8.1%
Clarity regarding role	4	8.1%
Next steps/Planning	6	12.2%
Disseminate information to service users	3	6.1%
Disseminate information to teams/colleagues	6	12.2%
Disseminate information (locally and funded groups)	3	6.1%
Structure for PSC in our area	1	2%
Coordination of outputs in the area	1	2%
Support parents (how to)	2	4%
To discuss other services, suggestions with PPFs manager	1	2%
Try to link up more in the mid-west	1	2%
Knowing that we're using evidence-based messages	1	2%
Need to talk to my manager and teams in how to move my role further	1	2%
Ideas around parental participation	2	4%
Resources/toolkits received (leaflets, posters, newsletter etc.)	1	2%
Motivated (offers hope)	1	2%
Participatory practice needs more development locally	1	2%
How to support staff to improve outcomes	1	2%
Helps me to work smarter	1	2%
Networking (key links with others in RLG)	2	4%
To try to emulate some of the ideas, in particular Donegal hub idea on 'change commitment'	1	2%
RLG provides a package of regional delivery which will help once collected - deliver a national strategy	1	2%
Streamline service	1	2%
Provide 24/7 as a resource	1	2%
Being innovative	1	2%
Making me aware that there are many options available	1	2%
Total	49	100%

4

4. Experience of the Parent Support Champions Regional Learning Groups

This section explores respondents' experiences of participating in the RLGs. Section 4.1 examines if knowledge gained would be easily applicable to practice. Section 4.2 outlines respondents' comments on their experiences of the RLGs, and section 4.3 provides an account of suggestions made by respondents for the next round of the RLGs.

4.1 Responses to 'I will be able to apply the knowledge learned to my practice'

In order to ascertain whether knowledge gained from participating in the RLGs would be easily applicable to practice, PSC respondents were asked to rate the following statement: 'I will be able to apply the knowledge learned to my practice'. Of the 59 PSC respondents, 52 agreed with the statement.

Table 16: Responses to 'I will be able to apply knowledge learned to my practice'

Region	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer
Dublin North East	4	3	1	-	-	-
Dublin Mid-Leinster	5	3	-	-	-	-
South	5	8	-	2	-	-
West	8	16	3	-	-	1
Total	22	30	4	2	-	1



4.2 Experiences of the Regional Learning Groups

This section provides a summary of comments made by respondents on their experiences of the RLG and is divided into Tusla's four regional areas for clarity.

Dublin North East

Comments on experiences of the DNE RLG were generally positive, with most responses (33.3%) highlighting that hearing ideas and experiences from other areas was most useful.

Table 17: DNE experiences of RLG

Comments	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Better understanding and confidence in delivering PSC info and key messages	1	8.3%
Gave better understanding of area structures	1	8.3%
Useful to hear other experiences/ideas	4	33.3%
Useful to identify gaps/barriers/issues and ways to resolve them	2	16.6%
Experience would be better enhanced if there was a local strategy and implementation plan. Feels like I'm working in a vacuum.	1	8.3%
Enjoyed the learning and the opportunity to focus on the PSC role	1	8.3%
Good networking opportunity	2	16.6%
Total	12	100%

Dublin Mid Leinster

All comments on experiences of the DML RLG were very positive. Gaining and sharing of information was a prominent theme for this group, with 45.4% of responses pertaining to this area.

Table 18: DML experiences of RLG

Comments	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Small group sessions were great	1	9%
Organised, pleasant, positive	1	9%
Good sharing, informative, gained information, lots of information and ideas, particularly re IT	5	45.4%
Worthwhile	1	9%
Has motivated with some new ideas	1	9%
Enjoyed the practical approach	1	9%
Productive	1	9%
Total	11	100%

South

Shared learning was the most prominent theme (23%) across the comments by respondents from the South RLG, with the majority of experiences being generally positive. One comment in this group, however, maintained that direction could be better.

Table 19: South experiences of RLG

Comments	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Useful in planning next steps	2	7.7%
Feeding back of information re what the group has achieved collaboratively was informative	1	3.8%
Seeing great progress in other areas	1	3.8%
Seeing progress identified constraint within own role	1	3.8%
Funding and support for project is poor in terms of promotion/resources, etc.	1	3.8%
Direction could be better	1	3.8%
better grasp of what PSCs are	1	3.8%
See the parenting 24/7 information as an additional resource to my toolbox	1	3.8%
Good to have theme/topic for the day	1	3.8%
Friendly, well-organised, positive	3	11.5%
The most beneficial training day of PSCs so far	1	3.8%
Good to meet other PSCs	2	7.7%
Very supportive, do not feel judged	1	3.8%
Great to have a learning group to 'centre' the work	1	3.8%
Shared learning. Understand what's being done in other areas and that everyone is at different stages. Greater knowledge of what is/what is not working, Share the learning.	6	23%
Motivated/Encouraged	1	3.8%
More clarity at this meeting	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

West

As with all other RLGs, sharing and gaining information was the most prominent theme across comments for this group, with 30.2% of responses referring to it. Most comments were generally positive, but there do seem to be some areas that may require further clarification for respondents, particularly regarding the role and the remit of the PSC (5.6%).

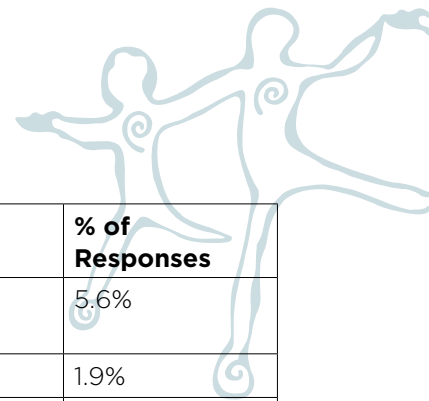


Table 20: West experiences of RLG

Comments	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Good to get access to national handouts, flyers, posters. Access to resources very useful.	3	5.6%
Access to toolkits and information to share with professionals	1	1.9%
Access to toolkits and information to share with parents	1	1.9%
Gaining Information from other areas: Interesting to hear of role and expectations of PSCs in other areas. Good to get together with people who are driven by the topic, knowledge of other areas, ideas/ action discussed very helpful, group sharing helpful. Also helpful in understanding promotion of parenting support strategy in other areas, what works well for other areas, how might develop in own area, regional news and ideas.	16	30.2%
Clarity regarding role: Clarity regarding 'our business' vs general population, need to be clear on our role in each area. Just need a greater sense of clarity and purpose.	3	5.6%
Good pace, relaxed and accommodating of natural discussions, supportive facilitator, excellent literature, venue is lovely, energy is good, interactive group, meeting was beneficial, informative, positive experience.	10	18.9%
Need clear indicators	1	1.9%
Assisted in next steps/Planning	3	5.6%
PSC needs to be connected to a local structure - needs to be a local plan	1	1.9%
It is unclear who is driving the plan, CYPSC/Tusla	1	1.9%
Are the key messages to be targeted at all parents or parents that PSC links with	1	1.9%
Reassured that not alone in grappling with how best to promote the role of the PSC	2	3.8%
Motivated: Acknowledge the vast amount of energy, passion and potential for this strategy. Feels like it's all coming together, feel energised, opportunities and potential evident	3	5.6%
How the group in Donegal set up parent hub	1	1.9%
Our programmes are evidence-based and very restricted on time, but we will endeavour to share key messages linked to programme	1	1.9%
Great opportunity to be reminded of the national plan/structure for PSC	1	1.9%
So far each session has been helpful about what is going on nationally in Tusla	1	1.9%
Being given voice to all the hard work going on out there	1	1.9%
Reflecting on my area, service and practice and how I can make positive changes to promote better service to parents and children	1	1.9%
Networking	1	1.9%
Total	53	100%

4.3 Suggestions for the next round of Regional Learning Groups

This section provides an account of suggestions made by respondents for future RLGs, and is again divided by region for clarity.³ As is evident from Tables 21-24 below, there were a variety of suggestions from respondents.

Table 21: Dublin North East suggestions for future RLGs

This was planned and worked very well
Handouts on what was discussed today so we don't [go] over same info again
Manager for PPFS and CYPSC coordinator needs to be present
Add a space to look at 'theme' each meeting coming from gaps highlighted and information needed
Clarity around the PSC role
Clarity around resources

Table 22: Dublin Mid-Leinster suggestions for future RLGs

Smaller group sessions
Support each group to focus on one aspect and come prepared
Hear more about what happens nationally outside area (Dublin Mid-Leinster)
Possibly all PPFS managers to attend
Excellent information sharing
Networking
Support
Time constraint - Felt time was a bit too short

Table 23: South suggestions for future RLGs

Include presentation/sharing of parenting workshops
Include more resources and ideas from Tusla coordinators for PSCs to use
Include more insight into how the committees/networks interlink, as still unclear on this
Include discussion/forum on how to reach all parents
Include information on how to engage 'difficult' parents
Continue to promote objectives as laid out by being a PSC - Parenting Support Strategy
Require more direction on expectations of role
Update from groups
Share the progress in the context of people's different roles as we have done it geographically
Provide lists of useful contacts and resources
Agree on standardised questions for focus groups
Role of PPFS vs CYPSC coordinator in supporting PSC at local level

³ For suggestions made more than once, the amount is indicated by ()

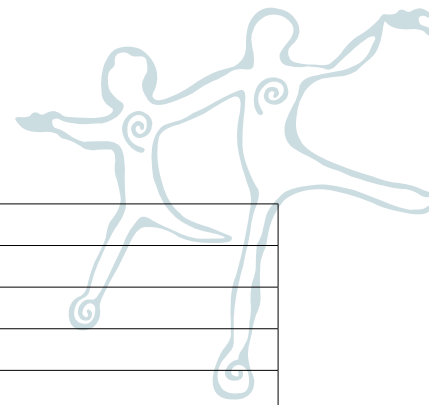


Table 24: West suggestions for future RLGs

Have local plans been put in place ... if so, what works
What has worked in any county
Is the feedback, especially in relation to gaps, being fed to top
Follow up with gaps identified at next date
What were the barriers in any county
PPFS representation through a clear agreement re PSC - attendance not necessary
RLGs can enhance parent support by giving it credibility and status nationally
RLGs can enhance parent support by highlighting issues nationally
More ideas from other regions (x2)
Input on parenting commission piece
Distribute minutes - Minutes being sent out will help in bringing issues forward
Set out a clear role in PC what does it mean, what are the expectations on an individual/regional basis? How do you measure whether you are achieving what you are supposed to do or not?
For RLG to take place again locally early September
Venue was perfect and the day was the right length of time and very well facilitated
Interested in viewing newsletter
How to promote parenting 24/7 in our area
How to target parents, especially the 'seldom heard' through social media, Facebook, etc.
Video conferencing to minimise travel
Look at specific parenting difficulties, e.g. children with anxiety, autism, children disabilities (x2)
National campaigns
Could conferences be moved around the country
How could some of the ideas being generated be standardised across the country
Look in more detail at some of the ideas that were discussed
Feedback on how parenting 24/7 and attachment training have impacted
Enjoyed the format of today
Programmes and practices in putting forward key messages
Need to involve social work with this work
More detailed presentation of models of good practice
Day was short, they could be longer and very beneficial discussions if time was longer
How to engage the media in 24/7
Engaging reluctant stakeholders
Include information on supporting fathers

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5. Other Comments

In the final section of the PSC, part of the RLG questionnaire space was provided for respondents to make any other comments on the RLG if they wished to do so. This section provides an account of those comments by the three regions that answered the question. There were no further comments made by respondents in the Dublin Mid-Leinster region.

Table 25: Other comments from Dublin North East

Really enjoyed the morning
Found it informative and helpful in role
Great to meet other PSCs in a smaller group
Not sure - other meetings have taken place - one at St Helena's and another in Blanchardstown Area Partnership - confused as to how many meetings I have to commit to.
Excellent, warm, relaxed but focused facilitation

Table 26: Other comments from South

A proportion of PSC appears to being allowed to develop from the ground up, and this seems to be making it easier to engage with PSCs
Great to see a positive concept emerge into positive actions
Thanks for the opportunity

Table 27: Other comments from West

Very enjoyable
There's quite a commitment required to support a PSC
The National Strategy for Parenting needs to be part of the social work mandate, like the way Meitheal has and is being established nationwide
Newsletter is a brilliant addition to this collaboration
Feeling energised
It gives me hope that there is much to build on and a lot of wonderful work happening across the region
Good morning

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6. Respondents Other than PSCs

As stated in section 2.1 of this report, the employment profile of the respondents indicates that 57 PSCs completed the questionnaire and three respondents identified themselves as belonging to the 'other' category. This section contains the findings pertaining to those who are not classified as PSCs and have identified themselves as: a PPFS manager, a CYPSC coordinator and an RI manager.

There were positive views on the experience of participating in the RLG from this cohort, who said the RLG would enhance parenting support through the sharing of information and making change, creative discussion of regional implementation as well as through the development of the PSC newsletter. Reflecting thoughts on creative discussion, there was a suggestion that each area should identify positive practice for future RLGs, with more time needed for such engagement. In addition, participation in the RLG resulted in respondents from this group committing to support the coordination of PSCs in their area, strengthen links and become more involved in planning for local areas.

7

7. Conclusion

This research is part of a study to examine the process, implementation and outcomes of the Tusla Parenting Support Champions Project formed as part of the parenting work stream of the Prevention Partnership and Family Support Development and Mainstreaming Programme. This report is one element of the evaluation of the Parenting Support Champions project and specifically focused on the Regional Learning Groups (RLGs) which were set up to support the Parenting Support Champions in their role. This report presents the findings of a questionnaire developed to ascertain the experiences of the Parenting Support Champions (PSCs) who attended the first round of the Tusla-led RLGs.

7.1 Key Messages

Going back to the specific research questions for the RLG questionnaire, this section provides an overview of the key findings based on the results of the analysis.

What respondents hoped to gain from participating in RLGs

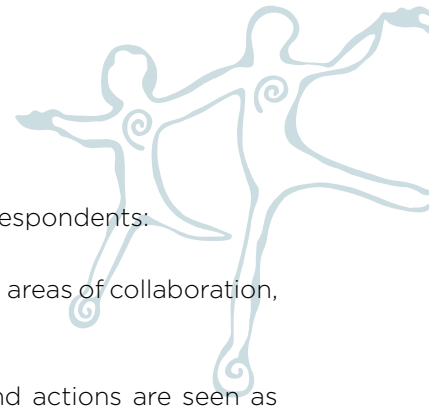
The main areas in which respondents hoped to gain understanding are:

- Knowledge of and information on what others in the role of PSC were doing to support parenting at both regional and local level;
- Information on next steps and future planning for local and regional areas, particularly around action plans and strategies;
- Clarity on the role of the PSC in terms of expectations, remit and future development of the PSC initiative.

How participation in the Regional Learning Group supported respondents to develop their role as Parenting Support Champions

57 of the 59 respondents felt that participation in the RLG supported them to develop their role as a Parenting Support Champion, particularly in terms of the following:

- Sharing information and learning from other PSCs and other areas;
- Improved planning capabilities as a result of hearing other experiences, leading to reassessments and re-focus for many;
- The role of the PSC was clearer after participation in the RLGs for some, although clarity may be still be required for others;
- 52 of 59 PSC respondents agreed that they would 'be able to apply the knowledge learned to practice'.



How knowledge gained in RLGs will benefit practice

There are a number of ways in which knowledge gained will benefit practice for respondents:

- Discussions in RLGs have generated a number of ideas to improve practice in areas of collaboration, evaluation and dissemination, for example;
- Information on planning will benefit practice, as planning is actionable and actions are seen as progressive;
- Information gained has led to increased confidence in the role of PSC for some respondents, which will benefit practice.

Experiences of the Regional Learning Groups

Experiences of RLGs were largely positive for the respondents; overall the sessions were seen as: friendly, non-judgemental, positive, motivating, well organised and supportive, with opportunities and potential being evident for some as a result of gaining more clarity.

Suggestions for future Regional Learning Groups

Various suggestions for future RLGs were put forward by the respondents, with the most prominent pertaining to:

- More clarity on the role of the PSC and the role and remit of other groups, such as CYPSC, CFSN, PPFS managers and Tusla coordinators, and how these interlink or interact. Further to this is the idea that these groups should attend RLGs.
- The need to include information on engaging hard to reach populations;
- Follow up on gaps identified.



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