



investing in lone parents – breaking the cycle of disadvantage

New Futures; New Opportunities;
New Confidence- exploring poverty and
route ways out of poverty

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about one-parent families in ireland

- 1 in 8 people in Ireland live in a one-parent family (Census 2011)
- 1 in 4 families with children in Ireland is a one-parent family (Census 2011)
- Over half a million people live in one-parent families in Ireland (Census 2011)
- 13.5 per cent of one-parent families are headed by a father (Census 2011)
- Almost 1 in 5 children (18.3%) live in a one-parent family (Census 2011)
- There are over 215,000 one-parent families in Ireland today – 25.8 per cent of all families with children (Census 2011)
- People in lone parent households tend to have the lowest disposable income out of all households in the state (EU-SILC 2010)
- Those living in lone parent households continue to experience the highest rates of deprivation with almost 69% of individuals from these households experiencing one or more forms of deprivation (EU-SILC 2010)
- OFP recipients more than twice (16.9%) at risk of ‘consistent poverty’ than the population (6.9%) as a whole



about the one-parent family payment

- 78,586 recipients in July 2013 **reducing to 45,000 in 2015**
- OFP age profile (April 2012) | 13% aged between 15 and 24 / 56% between 25 and 39 / 31% between 40 and 66
- 2014 36% of current OFP recipients are working **reduced from 60% in 2012**
- **2015 In-work poverty becomes the focus**

our work

- Ensuring a positive and equal future for all
- Supporting families as they parent through times of family, work and life change
- Delivering parent centred services
- Helping to enable better lives for parents and children

**10 Solutions *for*
Smarter Futures**





influences on practice I

1

Prevention of long-term dependence on welfare

2

The need for parental choice with regard to care of young children

3

Expectation of participation in education, training and employment



influences on practice II

1

Yet 32,000 children are at risk of poverty -18.8% of all children in Ireland EUSILC, 2011

2

2011 Census 215,315 one-parent families in Ireland
26% of all families with children
22% - almost 352,000 - of all children

3

SILC demonstrated one-parent households are the most deprived
56% classified as deprived



parenting alone challenges 1

- Increased risk of poverty due to dependence on welfare and no spare financial capacity.
- Tax and welfare traps coupled with transition costs in the system that deepen poverty and exclusion
- Internal barriers linked to low confidence and self-esteem,
- Access to high quality, flexible, affordable childcare.
- Low educational attainment arising from early school leaving and relevance of qualifications and skills to current labour market requirements.



parenting alone challenges 2

- Social isolation and lack of personal supports and networks
- Access to transport to and from education, training and employment in both urban and rural areas
- Access to affordable quality housing
- Health challenges arising from stress, domestic violence, legal issues or a poor sense of general well-being.
- Reconciling work and family life.



drivers of practice 1

- OECD, 'Doing Better for Families' 2011, Ireland has a long way to go if we are to meet international standards in parenting and family policy.
- One Family promotes and communicates that:
 - Early childhood services is an investment in human capital, and should be protected from 'austerity cuts'.
 - Public support for childcare services should be linked to work-life balance policies
 - 'A coherent policy approach for the early years would ensure that childcare, (parenting and family) services are available when leave benefits run out.'
 - Reducing child poverty requires a carefully designed policy-mix, including both income supports and the provision of services.
 - Quality of childcare is critical in child development



drivers of practice 2 -growing up in a one-parent family:

The Influence of Family Structure on Child Outcomes- Fahey, Tony, 2012, 'Family Relationships and Family Well-Being: A Study of the Families of Nine Year-Olds in Ireland', FSA and UCD.

1. Major finding as it relates to policy, is that once socio-economic background differences are taken into account, the association between negative child outcomes and living in a one-parent or cohabiting family is substantially reduced.
2. The implication is that family structure does not have a major direct influence on child outcomes.
3. A move towards a welfare system – which supports families on the basis of low educational attainment, poor employment prospects and low levels of income rather than the residential status of the parent – impacts on poverty.



reforms – policy rationale

- 1. Despite significant levels of State spending, the results have been poor in terms of tackling poverty and social exclusion rates of one parent families**
- 2. One parent families continue to be more than twice at risk of ‘consistent poverty’ than the population as a whole (16.9% to 6.9%, respectively).**
- 3. The best route out of poverty, social and economic exclusion is through paid employment.**



reforms – parents affected

- In total, an estimated **58,533** OFP recipients will lose their entitlement to the OFP payment between 2013 and 2015.

	2013	<u>2014</u>	2015	Total
Total number of OFP recipients affected	8,185	9,190 (est.)	41,158 (est.)	58,533 (est.)
Numbers affected in July of each year	6,194	5,142 (est.)	36,348 (est.)	



jobseeker's allowance (JA) transitional arrangement a OneFamily innovation

- The JA transitional arrangement is provided for in the Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2013.
- Recipients who lose their entitlement to the OFP payment, and who have a **youngest child aged under 14 years**, can apply for the JA transitional arrangement.
- Recipients must continue to parent alone and cannot co-habit with another person.
- Recipients of the JA transitional arrangement are exempt from the JA criteria that require them to be available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work.
- Recipients can work more than three days per week – subject to satisfying the full JA means test.



new ideas that create value

delivering a climate for inspiration

The 4-*i* process:

*i*dea >> What's the issue, what could be the solution?

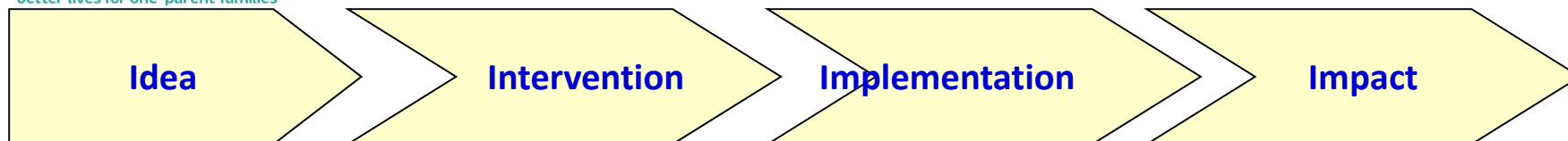
*i*ntervention >> Conceptualisation, find methods and allies

*i*mplementation >> Overcoming resistance, stakeholders, life cycle!

*i*mpact >> Not necessarily, good, nor for the whole of society



the actions



- **Three perspectives to analyse objectives and impact:**
 - the **social demand** perspective,
 - the **societal challenges** perspective, and
 - the **systemic change** perspective.
- Agnès Hubert et al. (BEPA – Bureau of European Policy Advisors)
- **Empowering people – driving change. Social Innovation in the European Union.**
- **http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/publications_pdf/social_innovation.pdf**

our model

Step 1

- **Identification of problem**

• Client work Consultation Evidence-based research Policy analysis

Step 2

- **Service response**

• Develop response Pilot response Evaluate Revise
• Develop professional and practice learning products

Step 3

- **Mainstream**

• Pilot with mainstream agencies Roll out training products Quality assurance



our supports

our model

- 1. Focused specialist family support for progression to education, skill development and employment**
2. Provision of expert parenting and family support to those parenting alone or sharing parenting
3. Delivery of professional development services to those working with one-parent families



parenting and family support services

- Positive Parenting
- Child Contact Centre
- Shared Parenting
- Solution focused counselling
- Play therapy
- Family Communications
 - Dads' Workshops
 - Parent Mentoring
 - General counselling
- Engagement Mentoring



engagement mentoring for education and work

- returning to education or employment daunting
- raises many questions—
 - Will I have the time?
 - Could I possibly have the ability to return to learning?
 - How do I go about getting a job?
 - How can I be a good parent and return to education or employment?



engagement mentoring

- Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge work or thinking' (Clutterbuck 1990)
- 'To help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be' (Parsloe, 1992)



what is engagement mentoring ?

- a positive developmental partnership, which is driven primarily by the parent; offers **reflective space** where the parent can take responsibility for and discuss their development
- Its primary aim is to **build capability and self-reliance** in the parent
- Mentors can help **highlight issues** and to assist the parent in **planning** ways through them
- They can help **clarify the parent's perspective** while bringing an additional **impartial view** to bear on the issues
- Sometimes, when the issues are straightforward and urgent, a Mentor might offer advice or give some direction
- **Confidentiality, trust, understanding and positive expectation** are key to a successful partnership



engagement mentoring

- role of the engagement mentor
 - sit down and work through these concerns with a mentor and
 - discover the possibilities of returning to education or employment.
 - getting the balance right between work life and family life is a challenge
 - exploring needs and your own personal circumstances and begin to create an exciting plan for the future.



engagement mentoring

- **delivering engagement mentoring**
 - model based on the development of a relationship of trust at the individual level
 - developing the ‘emotional lift’ required to achieve the ‘positional shift’ needed to support lone parents who face multiple barriers to employment and learning



overcoming barriers

- **Providing active advice / advocacy to lone parents enabling parents to consider work and learning opportunities**
- **Exploring supports required and how to access these**
- **Developing supportive work and learning models**
- **Encouraging parents, local stakeholder organisations and service providers to improve low levels of educational attainment and the corresponding low skill levels and essential skills issues**

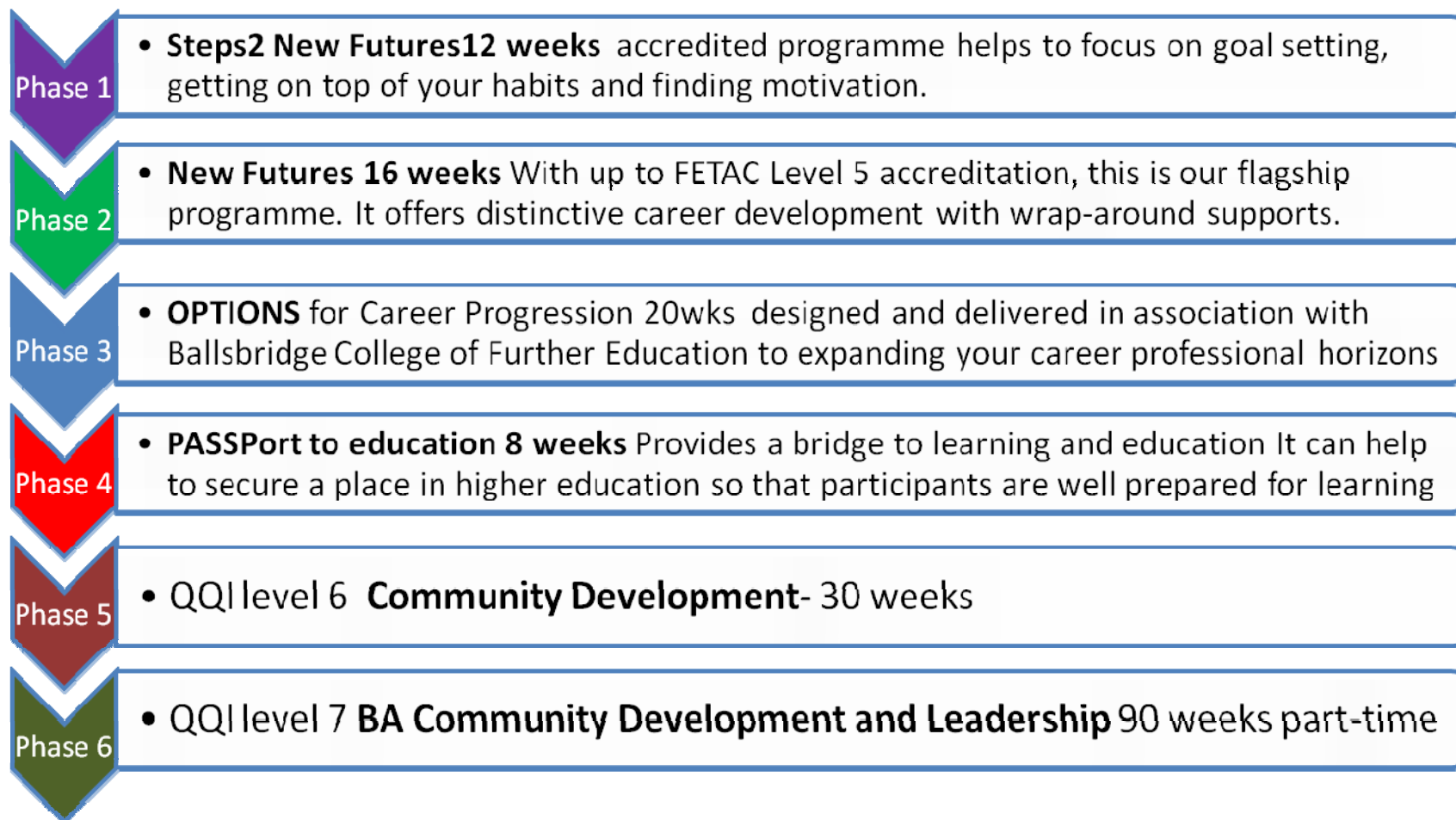


emphasis

- avoiding duplication and enabling people to make the most effective use of already available resources.
- supports lone parents developing localised strategies and approaches that combine informal networks, outreach and cross referral with employment linkage activities.
- mentors will provide the link between employment and learning programmes and services, supporting the aspirations and needs of lone parents and local employers
- service is part of the New Futures programmes; but can also be accessed by other service users

welfare to work

QQI accredited on the national framework of qualifications





welfare to work

- **careerclinic**

- a proactive and creative approach ,**7 steps careerclinic** will provides participants with practical support and advice on:

- career review, assessment and guidance,
 - CV preparation,
 - interview techniques,
 - how to capitalise on transferable skills in order to find employment
 - challenges and solutions in parenting alone

-



professional development

- **Up-skilling those working with one parent families**

Our programme

- Committed through education and training to assisting practitioners, in both the performance of their duties and in their practice.
- Continuing effort to meet needs, we research and develop best practices to promote professional development.
- Knowing the time demands faced
- Providing a range of programmes including customised in-house programmes, short generic half- and full-day seminars, master-classes and conferences.



SUCCESSES

benefits for participants

- Orient career
- Identify goals
- Increase self-confidence
- Better understand the job market
- Learn how to find and keep a job
- Gain experience
- Explore individual resources and options
- Identify personal skills
- Assess job-search tools
- Access customized support
- Enhance advantage in moving forward











benefits for practioners

- Boost skills and effectiveness
- Enabling increased productivity
- Informing of new and best practices or legislation,
- Enabling to meet customer needs
- Helping to retain high-quality talent and motivated people



our recommendations

1. A stronger, integrated, accessible and supported framework to enhance lone parents' opportunities to balance work and family life and therefore fully engage in education, skill development and work: recognizing that it is not just jobs, but jobs that pay and offer opportunities for progression, with an emphasis on sustaining and progressing in work to ensure all lone parents who need help to develop their skills have access to the relevant pre-employment and in-work development.
1. To promote a personalised and responsive approach to individual needs which will provide tailored employment and skills support to meet the needs of both lone parents and local employers, and assert a partnership approach with public and the community and voluntary sector working together to maximize innovation, leading to more and better outcomes.

Report Card 2013		Name: Irish Government	
<p>Assessed against One Family's 10 Solutions for Smarter Futures.</p> <p>Ten practical and economic solutions that would greatly improve the quality of lives of the adults and children of one-parent families in Ireland today.</p>			
Solution		Comment	Grade
ONE Flexibilities and the Jobseeker's Transition Payment (JTP)		Listening to One Family, Government has delivered an effective response which recognises the caring needs of parents in that lone parents on JTP only need to be seeking part-time work. Good work!	B-
TWO Wrap-around Childcare		After school care pilot in place. Need to recognise that affordable and accessible childcare is an economic issue which enables parents to manage work. Comprehensive plan is needed for all of out of school care. Must take this more seriously.	D
THREE Bridging Programmes		Little understanding demonstrated about the needs and timescales required for all those who are distant from the labour market to ensure they can take their equal chances. Some improvement in effort but no impact.	D+
FOUR Expert Guidance		Greater effort is required to tailor supports to parents' real needs. Professional skills required to improve poorly resourced state delivery of welfare to work services. Must work smarter.	E
FIVE Responsive Learning		Some improvement here. But no national plan for accessible part-time learning and development and this needs to be in place. More efforts required outside Dublin.	D
SIX Progression Opportunities		Plan in place but no jobs yet. Greater effort needs to be made in growing jobs in the domestic economy. All else will fail if this is not addressed properly.	D
SEVEN Income Security		More children and families are poor and frightened. Government needs to take an innovative approach to reform. Massive effort required.	E
EIGHT Work-life Balance		Austerity means we are now an economy not a society. Repeated Budget attacks such as those on maternity leave and One-Parent Family Tax Credit are unacceptable. Government and employers need to support caring responsibilities of parents. Must pay more attention.	F
NINE Joined-up Delivery of Services		Less talk and more action needed. Greater effort and whole of Government understanding on how outcome-based budgeting can help the poorest in society. Team work required.	D
TEN Poverty and Parent Proofing		Some improvement here since Budget 2012; but efforts not rigorous enough to really make a difference to the cumulative impacts of budget measures. Greater attention needed.	D
<p>Overall Assessment</p> <p>Since Budget 2012, the benchmark assessment, there have been some changes. There is great potential to deliver a modern welfare, tax and social support system. If we expect lone parents to plan for their future, we need to acknowledge that they need a financial base that can be relied on. Unfortunately our welfare system cannot claim to provide this. Income security is what is needed, a basic foundation on which people can rely and plan for their family's future. If Government does not pull its socks up, it is impossible to imagine that any changes will do more than transform an awful system into a bad one. Need to focus on listening and communication skills.</p>			
Grading Scale		A - Excellent B - Above Average C - Satisfactory D - Needs Improvement E - Extra Effort Urgently Required F - Fail	



10 Solutions *for* Smarter Futures

- 1. Flexibilities...achieved**
- 2. Wrap- around Child Care ...partly achieved**
- 3. Welfare to Work ... national programme**
- 4. New Futures...national programme**
- 5. Progression opportunities...achieved**
- 6. Education and Training...in discussion**
- 7. In Work Supports...changing the dialogue**
- 8. Worklife Balance...changing the dialogue**
- 9. Outcome Budgets...One Family Budget Panel**
- 10. Poverty Reduction...getting there**



where to find us



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