REVIEW OF COMMUNITY MOTHERS PROGRAMME

Susan Brocklesby
Why a review?

To establish the current status of the Community Mothers Programme in Ireland with a view to the development of a strategic plan for the future of the Programme.
Origins of Community Mothers Programme in Ireland

- Walter Barker 1979 Bristol University
- Childhood Development Programme
- First Parent Health Visitor Scheme
- 1983 Dublin – Pilot - Brenda Molloy
- Community Mother Model
- Family Development Nurse
- Bernard Van Leer Foundation

First time parents
0-1 year (extend to 2 yrs)
1 hr visit once a month
Geographically targeted
20 families per CM
Parent sheets / materials
Research


• European Platform for Investing in Children
**Original Model**

- Family Development Nurse
- Health Board
- Had a Programme Director
- Barker materials and training
- Bernard Van Leer Foundation
- 11 Programme areas in Eastern Health Board
- Southern Health Board (Kerry)

**Community Model**

- Coordinator
- Com & vol. structure
- No Programme Director
- Barker materials and training
- Bernard Van Leer Foundation
- Mid-Western; Midlands and North Eastern Health Board areas
- South & North Tipperary; Athlone merged Longford / Westmeath
- Parents First Laois / Offaly
- 0-2 Programme Docklands
## Eastern Health Board Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of changes</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Director</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment areas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Development Nurses</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Coordinators</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mothers</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families availing of the Programme</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Programmes closed 2013-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin North</td>
<td>Darndale/Coolock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin North Central</td>
<td>Ballymun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin West</td>
<td>Neilstown Ballyfermot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin West</td>
<td>Clondalkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin South City</td>
<td>Ringsend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin South West</td>
<td>Tallaght</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin South East</td>
<td>Ballinteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare / West Wicklow</td>
<td>Newbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>Bray</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finglas Community Mothers Programme

Loughlinstown Community Mothers Programme

Limerick Community Mothers Programme

Longford/Westmeath Community Mothers Programme

Clonmel Community Mothers Programme

North Tipperary Community Mothers Programme

Kerry Community Parents Support Programme

Laois/Offaly Parents 1st

Dublin Docklands 0-2 Programme
Ethos

Building trust
Non-judgemental
Listening
Whole family
Gentle encouragement
Strong relationships
Strengths based
Person-centred
Respect and honesty
On their side
Patient

The Community Foundation for Ireland
Referrals

- HSE: 74%
- Tusla: 13%
- Com & vol.: 9%
- Self referral: 4%
Community Mothers

82% QQI Level 5 or higher
56% QQI Level 6-9

54 years = average age
38-71 years = age range

9 years = average length of service

Paid Model:
5 CMP sites pay €11-16.50 per hour

Volunteer Model:
3 CMP sites pay a stipend of €8-10 per hour
1 CMP site pays mileage only
## Funding levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total income received</th>
<th>Tusla (now Tusla)</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>HSE</th>
<th>CCC</th>
<th>Tony Ryan Tipperary Fund</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>€973,232</td>
<td>€465,657</td>
<td>€125,526</td>
<td>€308,908</td>
<td>€4,370</td>
<td>€41,764</td>
<td>€27,007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding sources

2017: 20% of all funding was at imminent risk
Parents

“She gave me all the information, and breastfeeding support – I just finished breastfeeding for nearly 3 years”

“I never felt judged”

“She really focused on my wellbeing and me as being the most important factor in caring for my baby”

“Well it was so different to other services, she took a real holistic point of view.”
Areas of support listed by parents

- Breastfeeding
- When a child in the family has an additional need
- Parent/child bond and parental confidence
- Parents and families undergoing social work assessment or custody situations
- Maternal mental health
- Good nutrition and weaning
- Breaking the cycle of parenting behaviours within a family and across generations
- Parents who do not have a social network or who are parenting alone
What parents valued?

- Relationship: 101
- Support: 76
- Information & advice: 71
- Accessibility: 54
- Confidence & reassurance: 36
- Reducing social isolation: 24
- Advocacy: 14
- Group work: 12

The Community Foundation for Ireland
Relationship - explored

- Informality
- Different to other services
- Patience
- Gentle encouragement
- Responsive
- Confidential
- Personal
- Not pushy
- Listening
- Kindness/empathy
- Non judgemental
- Professional
- Welcoming

The Community Foundation for Ireland
Local stakeholders

- Highly regarded
- Limited, if any, duplication
- Positive working relationships
- Strong interagency working (a minority with limited engagement)
- Vulnerability of funding – Health funding
- Can provide key supports to high need families
- Need for updating, reviewing and clarifying model
They are just so wary of social workers, but they needed support and the Community Mothers Programme was just so accessible and acceptable.

It’s really practical and it adapts to the needs of the mothers and the community.

‘Competent, capable and professional’

‘Really good at engaging parents’
Challenges

- Meeting families needs
- Funding
- Interagency
- Organisational
Opportunities

‘...building on the current PHN home visitation programme, an approach to home visiting services, across a continuum of need, will be agreed, having regard to Irish evidence on the implementation of prevention and early intervention initiatives.’

(First 5, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2018).
What works?

What works to promote better outcomes in para-professional home visiting?

- Antenatal engagement
- Training and support and supervision of home visiting staff
- The duration of the service (e.g. 2+years) and the frequency of the visits (e.g. weekly)
- The content of the home visit sessions – a core structure
- Responsiveness to the wider needs of the parent and the family as a whole
Outcome of review

- Differences + core similarities
- Strong parental satisfaction – relationship at the core
- Highly regarded by local stakeholders
- Challenges and sustainability
- Unique opportunity to realise its potential
- Consistent updated, evidence informed outcome focused national model
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towards a national model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standardise criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Short term recommendations

Bring together key funders to develop a future strategic agreement

- Explore future commitments to the Programme
- To explore and develop a process for a national model
- To address urgent site specific sustainability concerns
Medium and long term recommendations

Medium term: Develop a national future strategy

- National governance and oversight of development phase
- National model
- National profile and promotion

Long term: Evaluation
‘It’s amazing the impact one person can have on your life, at that very stressful and vulnerable time, the role of one person can make a considerable impact on you and then your family’ Parent