



Colin
Neighbourhood
Partnership™

Together we will make a difference



National Children's
Bureau

Outcomes Based Accountability and the Colin Early Intervention Community

A journey to improved outcomes
and decision making

October 2016

Change : Health : Education : Challenge : Impact : Improve



Journey : Communicate : People :

"The Outcomes Based Accountability approach is extremely important to us because, after years and years of racking our brains and trying hard to make a difference; the statistics and the reality in the community told us that the majority of the programmes offered didn't really improve conditions and everyday life for the vast majority of people living in the community."
(Manager, CNP)



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Why was a new approach to improving outcomes needed?

We take it as read that anyone who works with children, young people and families wants to make a difference to their lives. Over the last number of years, or indeed decades, people from across the community and voluntary sector, and the statutory sector have worked hard to make a difference to young people's lives in some of the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland.

Yet despite continued investments within these communities, and numerous 'new' initiatives established to address the apparent shortcomings of previous efforts, little has demonstrably changed for those who live in these areas.

In an area like Colin situated in West Belfast with a population of 20,000, and with well in excess of 60 services and programmes for children, young people and families, one might naturally come to the conclusion that improved outcomes, in areas such as health or education, would only be a matter of time. One could also almost be forgiven for thinking that improvements might happen by accident. Yet despite the plethora of services operating in the area, outcomes have failed to improve over the last number of decades. Indeed, up until the point the Colin Early Intervention Community (CEIC) came into being in 2011, the Colin area performed much more poorly relative to the Northern Ireland average across a broad range of socio-economic and health outcomes.

For example, in 2011, the year in which the Colin Early Intervention Community was established, 42% of 16-19 year olds had no formal educational qualifications compared to 22% across Northern Ireland. In other areas too, similar challenges existed – for example, in the 18 months prior to the establishment of CEIC, there were 21 deaths through suicide – the majority were in their mid-20s or even younger.

It was precisely because of this lack of improvement that the Colin Early Intervention Community came into existence.



"Clearly what we've been doing hasn't been working and that is not the fault of one individual or organisation. We need to work together better if we are to really make the difference needed for the people living in this area."
(Community service provider)

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What was different about the new approach?

CEIC recognised that not only did something need to be done to take on these challenges, but that things needed to be done differently. Research undertaken by NCB¹ to support the implementation of the Early Intervention Community showed that whilst there were plenty of services in the Colin area, the majority of them did not have evidence to show what difference they were making to the lives of children and families. This raised a fundamental question – how do we know we are doing the right things if we are not measuring impact? NCB also uncovered a number of other issues such as services not working together to share data to understand whether or not families are receiving enough of the right kind of services or whether some families are receiving too much or too little. So, what is different about CEIC?

- **Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) as the overarching framework for better planning and delivery of services:** OBA is being used at all levels:
 - At a Colin population level prioritising indicators for inclusion in an area-wide outcomes framework, gathering and exploring baseline data and undertaking turning-the-curve exercises with stakeholders to identify what works actions for taking forward.
 - At a programme/service level to embed effective performance management to monitor and improve impact of programmes and services.

Since 2013, NCB has worked with over 150 representatives from across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors in Colin to enhance their understanding of OBA and support its implementation across CEIC. This has created a shared understanding of and approach to implementing OBA (Assistant Director, NCB)

- **A cultural shift to outcomes-based decision making:** A lot of the change involved moving organisations from a point where performance of a programme was based on output data i.e. 'how many people participated in our programme?' towards using more important information to answer questions such as:

- Are the right people accessing programmes?
- Are they receiving the service in a timely manner? (If not, where are the issues occurring?)
- Are they getting the right amount of the programme?
- Are they actually better off and can we show that from the data?
- How can we use the data and our partners to help deliver an even better service?

In these more austere times, the availability of this data has fundamentally changed how decisions are made at a commissioning level, with investment being directed towards those services demonstrating real impact on children and families.

- **Greater focus on evidence-based and informed programmes/services:** All services or programmes coming forward for funding as part of the CEIC investment (£1.6 million initially) have to be evidence-based or evidence-informed, thus maximising the potential for positive outcomes, if implemented effectively.
- **A community development approach:** From the very outset CEIC was different to previous initiatives that had operated in the area in terms of its setup and structure. It adopted a community development approach – putting people from the local community at the very heart of decision making for driving improvements in their area. This approach emphasised the need for local stakeholders from across the community and voluntary sector to work collaboratively with statutory and private sector stakeholders. Indeed, the delivery

¹ This report is available online at: http://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/11%20COLIN%20ncb_final_report_-_product_1.pdf

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structures (incorporating representatives from across these sectors) reflected this desire.

- **A long-term investment:** CEIC recognised from the outset that the journey to improved outcomes and community well-being is a long-term journey. The social issues experienced by the community were deeply entrenched and were not going to be impacted upon with short-term funding cycles. There was a recognition, therefore, that this approach required continued and long-term investment, not only in the right programmes and services, but in winning over the hearts and minds of the community that this approach had the potential to deliver improved outcomes where previous initiatives had not made the difference.

"The OBA approach not only enables us to improve services and programmes of activity, it has also enabled us to bring community, voluntary and statutory organisations together to share responsibility and resources to ensure the community are better off as a result of the work done."

(Manager, CNP)



"We now have a shared game plan and to me the benefit has been this shared approach."

(Service Funder)

What outcomes are CELC trying to improve?

An initial review of area-wide outcomes and indicator data showed that Colin performed less well in comparison to Northern Ireland for all of those examined through extensive consultation with CELC stakeholders. The final outcomes framework focused on four areas and a small number of priority indicators as follows:

- **Outcome 1: All children and young people in Colin are healthy:**
Indicator(s): suicide rates; rates of breastfeeding; rates of smoking during pregnancy.
- **Outcome 2: All children and young people in Colin are enjoying learning and achieving:**
Indicator(s): literacy/numeracy levels of 8-11 year old children; attendance rates of young people at school.
- **Outcome 3: All children and young people in Colin live in safety and stability:**
Indicator(s): number of anti-social behaviour incidents in the Colin area; number of children on the Child Protection Register.
- **Outcome 4: All children and young people in Colin experience economic and environmental well-being:**
Indicator: % of children living in households with low income.

Is anyone better off?

The Colin community as a whole

The short answer is yes. The gap between Colin and the Northern Ireland average for many of the prioritised indicators has narrowed significantly. The figure below illustrates this for rates of smoking during pregnancy.

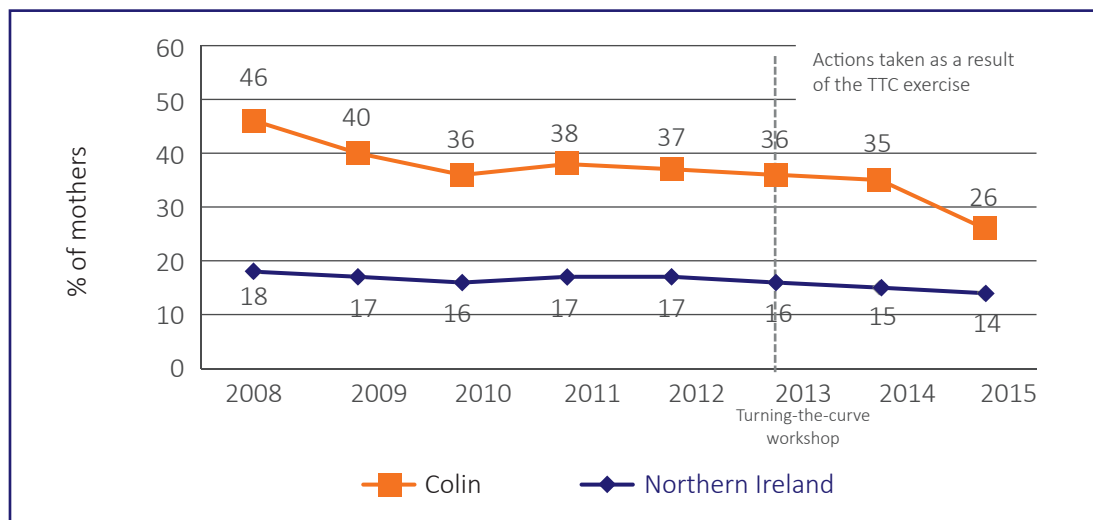
Rates of smoking during pregnancy

In 2008, almost one in every two (46%) mothers who were pregnant smoked during pregnancy compared to a Northern Ireland average of 18%. This represented a gap of 28 percentage points. Not only does smoking during pregnancy double the chances that a baby will be born too early or weigh less than 5 1/2 pounds at birth, but it also more than doubles the risk of stillbirth.

In late 2014, a turning-the-curve exercise was held. The exercise provided a crucial opportunity for stakeholders that have a role to play to come together and collectively look at the data, understand the story behind it and what could be done differently to turn-the-curve downwards. A number of actions were taken as a result of the workshop to help contribute towards reducing rates of smoking during pregnancy. One of these initiatives included support for some of the most vulnerable mothers in Colin to create a smoking free home.

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As can be seen from the graph above, rates of smoking during pregnancy had been reducing in the Colin area until 2010 and had plateaued between 2010 and 2013. At the turning-the-curve workshop in 2013, it had been forecasted that rates of smoking during pregnancy would fall slightly over future years in the absence of further intervention. However, in 2015, rates of smoking during pregnancy in Colin had fallen sharply to 26% (from 35% in 2014). Overall, the gap between Colin and Northern Ireland has reduced from 28 percentage points (pp) in 2008 to 12 pp in 2015.

In other areas too, there have been significant improvements evident across Colin. For example, the numbers of suicides in Colin in the years 2010 and 2011 stood at 22 in total. This has reduced considerably to 1 in 2015 and 1 in 2016*. A number of initiatives have been established in Colin to improve mental health and well-being including Colin Adolescent Counselling (see below for more details) and other initiatives, such as the Men's Shed are also making a contribution to improving men's health and well-being through the delivery of a range of activities such as snooker, golf trips and cookery classes.

At a programme beneficiary level

At a programme beneficiary level, the case studies overleaf illustrate how a number of CEIC-funded programmes are performing.

"Incredible Years helped me to think first and act later. Rather than to lose my temper and lash out, I would count to ten or leave the room. This gave both me and the child time to calm down and helped me (the parent) to take control of the situation and handle it to the best of my ability."
(Parent feedback on Incredible Years)

"I am really pleased with the development of her speech, she is really clear and emphasises what she is saying."
(Parent feedback on Speech and Language Therapy Service)

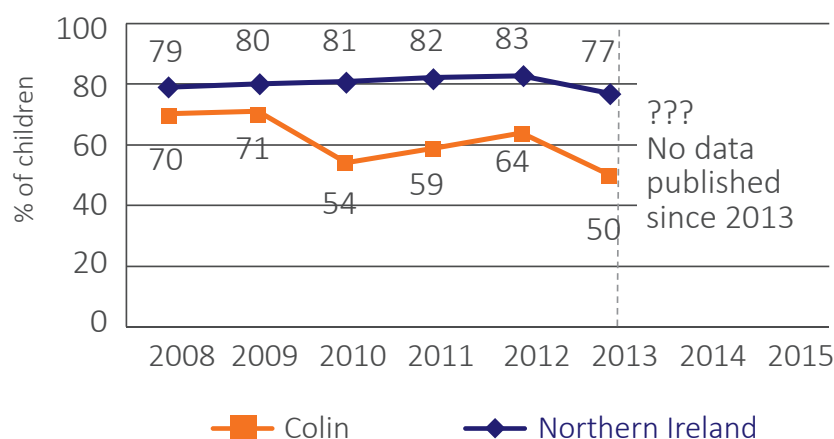
* As at end of June 2016

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Outcome: All children and young people in Colin enjoy learning and achieve

Indicator: Children achieve their expected level of attainment in English at age 11 (i.e. at the end of primary school)



Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT)

Delivered to children aged 5 to 8 with mild to moderate speech and language delay.

2013-2016

How much did we do?

279 children accessed service
3,345 support sessions delivered

How well did we do it?

79%

of parents very satisfied with service

Is anyone better off?

Before: **88%** of children had speech and language delays

After: **29%** of children had speech and language delays

Incredible Years (IY) Basic Parenting Programme

IY is a series of interlocking programmes to improve parenting skills and confidence. It has been operating in Colin for 3 years.

2013-2016

How much did we do?

200 parents accessed the programme

How well did we do it?

87%

of parents satisfied with the programme

Is anyone better off?

Before: **50%** of parents rated their child's behaviour as normal

After: **80%** of parents rated their child's behaviour as normal

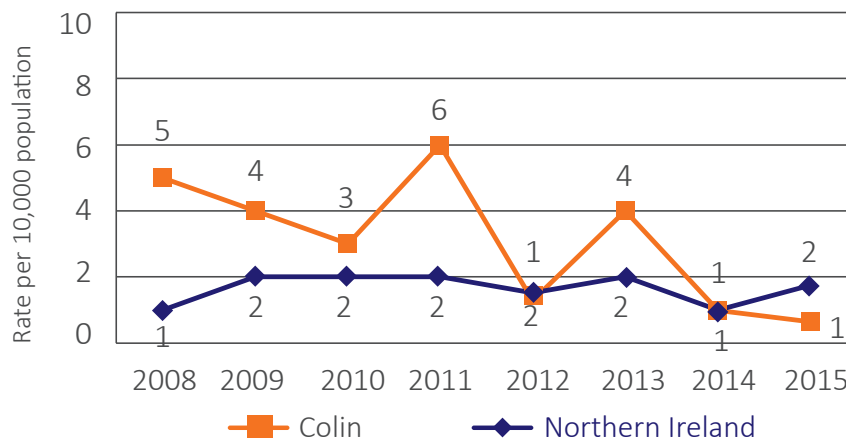
It is disappointing that administrative data on children's literacy levels has not been published since 2013 as this prevents CEIC from seeing the contribution that their investments are making to the Colin area.

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Outcome: All children and young people in Colin are healthy

Indicator: Number of suicides per 10,000 population



Colin Adolescent Counselling service

Targeted at young people aged 11-15 experiencing significant emotional trauma in their lives.

2013-2016

How much did we do?

 **46**
young people received the service

 **664**
sessions delivered


How well did we do it?


Average wait time



reduced from 56 days (in 2013)
to 13 days (in 2015)

Is anyone better off?

Before:
 **83%**
of young people in the borderline abnormal/abnormal range in terms of behavioural difficulties

After:
 **13%**
of young people in the borderline abnormal/abnormal range in terms of behavioural difficulties

Time 4 Me

Time 4 Me is a therapeutic school-based counselling service for children & their parents/carers. It operates during term time and school hours and on the school's grounds.

2013-2016

How much did we do?


Just over
 **230**
young people received the service


How well did we do it?

Overall, therapeutic play viewed as the most preferred aspect of service by

 **35%**
of young people

Is anyone better off?

Before:
 **81%**
of young people in the clinical range for stress

After:
 **12%**
of young people in the clinical range of stress

Area wide indicators

Contribution

Programme performance

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Where to next?

The journey to improved outcomes and decision making in Colin is exactly that - a journey. It requires a continuing commitment from all stakeholders to play their part in this new outcomes based approach. Commitment means that services are evaluated and funded based on the difference they make to people's lives.

Whilst initiatives like CEIC will continue with this disciplined approach, their success relies upon timely and reliable administrative data from government to both inform service planning and assess the contribution they make to area-wide change.

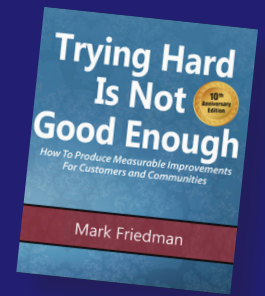
Without this discipline the best we can hope for is that change happens by chance, and not by purposeful and sustained effort.

"It gives you live, realistic performance data to make important management decisions... and I can tell you that that is hard to get."
(Service Commissioner)

Connecting with Colin



Fidelity in OBA Implementation: 2-3-7



2

2 kinds of accountability plus language discipline

Population accountability
– Outcomes & Indicators
Performance accountability
– Performance measures

3

3 kinds of performance measures

How much did we do?
How well did we do it?
Is anyone better off?

7

7 questions from ends to means

Baselines and Turning the Curve



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