

Master Class
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Developing a model for supporting the application of evidence-informed practice and policy in child and family and community-based services - the Centre for Effective Services 'Diagnostic' process

The Centre for Effective Services (CES) was established in 2008 in Ireland and Northern Ireland to promote and support the application of evidence-informed policy and practice by connecting the design and delivery of services with scientific and technical knowledge about what works. A non-profit, independent organisation funded by a partnership of government and philanthropy, it works to promote better outcomes for children, families and communities by providing tailored technical assistance to service-providing bodies, and by supporting policy makers and practitioners to use and apply evidence in their work.

As part of building a robust, evidence-based model for supporting service-providing organisations, CES has been developing and testing a 'Diagnostic Process' that provides a framework for agencies to engage with the Centre's multi-disciplinary service offer. The Diagnostic Process and its accompanying Diagnostic Tool promote reflection about key aspects of service design and delivery, from content to implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance as well as other critical elements of an effective service organisation such as organisational structure and management, and the management, utilisation and transfer of knowledge. The tool enables services to take a 360° approach to benchmarking their work against international evidence about key principles of effective practice. Subsequent stages of the process shape the Centre's response to working in partnership with services to build strengths and meet the development needs identified by the tool.

This workshop will describe the CES Diagnostic Process and discuss its development and application in practice. It will draw out learning from the work about the interface where science and theory meet the real challenges faced by services working with disadvantaged communities.

Deborah Ghate is the Director of the Centre for Effective Services. Previously, Deborah was the director of the Policy Research Bureau in London, a leading independent research centre where she led a number of national studies that have been influential in contributing to policy and practice both in the UK and Europe more widely.