Expert meeting on findings from the PIECES project:
National policies and plans on violence against children

Lorraine Radford
University of Central Lancashire
Brussels, Belgium
April 28, 2015
Background

A recent pan European review (Sethi et al, 2013) concluded

- 14% of girls and 6% of boys in Europe have been sexually abused in childhood
- 23% of girls and boys experienced physical violence from a caregiver
- 29% of girls and boys experienced ‘mental abuse’
- The harmful consequences of violence for children’s health and wellbeing are well known (Gilbert et al, 2009)
• Global public health and human rights bodies have urged nation states to develop national strategies to prevent and respond to VAC (Pinheiro, 2006; WHO, 2006).

• While many states have national plans, information on implementation is limited (MacKay & Vincenten, 2014; WHO, 2014).

• This study aimed to investigate expert respondents’ knowledge of implementing national policies and plans on VAC across EU28 states.

• Identify and share practice.
Definitions

Intentional injury or harm to child caused by:

1. CRC interpersonal violence across different settings:
   
   all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse’ directed at children, in any location and whether by an adult or peer perpetrator (Pinheiro, 2006).

About the survey

- Focus on VAC policy/plan content and coverage
- Detailed content of 3 most relevant policies/plans on child maltreatment, school & community violence, self-harm and suicide
- Previously identified & recommended national experts in 31 EU states approached
- Online survey or telephone interview option
- 18 (58%) responded but 4 (Austria, England, Scotland & Sweden) gave incomplete responses
- Sweden & Scotland excluded from analysis
National plans on VAC

- 63% (10 out of 16) had an agreed definition of VAC
- 88% (14) had a national policy on VAC
- 88% (14) had a national policy on child maltreatment
- 56% (9) had a national policy on school and community violence
- 31% (5) had a national policy to prevent child suicide/self harm
Areas of violence in plans

Of 28 different types of VAC covered in plans-

- 86% covered physical violence by parents
- 79% child sexual abuse
- 71% neglect
- 57% sexual exploitation
- 57% exposure to DV
- 57% emotional abuse
- 43% violence in care
- 36% FGM
- 29% peer violence
Breadth of plan coverage

Three groups emerged:

- Countries with a wide focus (23-26 types of VAC covered) = Spain, Denmark, Norway, Czech Republic

- Countries focusing mostly on family maltreatment, bullying and sexual abuse (10-16 types VAC covered) = Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia

- Countries with a narrow focus (4-6 types of VAC covered) = Croatia, Finland, Luxembourg, Netherlands
## Child maltreatment content

### 32 questions on content coverage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan content area questions</th>
<th>Percentage plans with coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing CRC (1)</td>
<td><strong>54% plans</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Prevention & early help (5) | 92% primary prevention  
54% early help  
15% self-harm |
| Identification & assessment (6) | **100% plans**  
39% assessment  
31% risk assessment |
| Victim support (6)          | **100% plans**  
62% child witness support  
30% child advocacy  
Only 1 state (Denmark) with child victim compensation |
| Coordination of responses (3) | **87% plans**  
77% government lead  
54% agency responsibilities  
31% case management |
| Equality & diversity (4)    | **62% plans**  
23% protection of Roma/traveller children |
| Responses to perpetrators (3) | **62% plans**  
39% prosecution or treatment |
| Alternative care (4)        | **54% plans**  
23% protection of children in detention |
Sector responsibilities

- Other
- Immigration
- Drug/alcohol
- Education/early years
- Child welfare/protection
- Justice system
- Health

Graph showing sector responsibilities with categories including suicide, school violence, and child maltreatment.
# Resources & evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of plan</th>
<th>Number who had a plan</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Based on research on prevalence &amp; impact</th>
<th>Based on research on effective responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child maltreatment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57% (n=8)</td>
<td>50% (n=7)</td>
<td>78.5% (n=11)</td>
<td>64% (n=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community violence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44% (n=4)</td>
<td>55% (n=5)</td>
<td>67% (n=6)</td>
<td>67% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide and self harm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80% (n=4)</td>
<td>100% (n=5)</td>
<td>80% (n=4)</td>
<td>60% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions & recommendations

• While the majority of states had a plan on VAC, fewer comprehensively covered all areas of children’s experiences
• Too few plans aimed to address CRC
• Plans were not always supported with resources for implementation
• Progress is difficult to measure when only around half of the state plans address monitoring
• At least two thirds of plans were informed by research evidence on effective responses to VAC
• Scope to improve planning for coordination, leadership & sector responsibilities
THANK YOU

PIECES

Policy Investigation in Europe on Child Endangerment and Support

PIECES receives funding from the European Union in the framework of the DAPHNE Programme and is led and coordinated by the European Child Safety Alliance.