

# TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## Business Plan 2021





# Contents

Foreword	05	Chapter 3: Human Resource Profile	25
About Tusla Child and Family Agency	08	Overview	25
About this Plan	10	Tusla Recruitment and Talent Management	25
Chapter 1: Business Plan Actions & Activity 2021	11	Capability	26
Chapter 2: Financial Framework	15	Retention	26
Overview	15	Industrial Relations / Employee Relations	26
Overall Funding for 2021	15	Tusla Staff Supports	26
Expected Outturn for 2020	16	Workforce Planning	27
2021 Budget Plan	19	Appendix 1 – Related Actions	28
Financial Risk Areas	20	Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms	32
Capital Expenditure	22		
Finance Priorities 2021	23		
Financial Profiling and Reporting	23		
Procurement Priorities	24		







## OUR VISION

Families & communities are empowered and strengthened to keep children safe and nurtured, recognising a child's right to protection, stability and the support of a family and community network.

## OUR MISSION

Dedicated and committed to working in partnership with children, families & communities to ensure that children in need or at risk of harm are supported, protected and connected to people who can safeguard and promote their wellbeing throughout their lives.



## Our Values & Behaviours



### Trust

We will be honest, truthful and responsible when providing our services

We will respect privacy

We will seek your feedback and use it to inform how we improve

We will follow through on our commitments



### Respect

We will treat people with dignity and fairness

We will collaborate and work in partnership with others

We will be informed and influenced by the opinions and experiences of others

We will communicate in a way that helps others to understand and we will listen to ensure we understand



### Kindness

We will show care and compassion with those who need our help

We will help where we see others that require assistance

We will be compassionate in explaining decisions even when the decision is difficult



### Empowerment

We will work hard to go the extra mile to help someone achieve their best

We will ensure we continuously learn and develop our knowledge and skills

We will work collectively with our stakeholders to achieve our collective goals

We will work hard with others to find solutions that work



Culture

Structure

Practice

# Our Goals

1

Ensure children, young people, families and communities receive a consistent, quality and integrated response from all our services.

2

Delivering an independent regulatory service focused on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through continuous improvement and partnership with stakeholders.

3

Ensure that our staff and leaders are supported and empowered to continuously learn and improve so that children, families and communities benefit from our service.

4

Ensure our local teams and services are facilitated and supported by National systems and resources that promote integration and accountability.



# About Tusla Child and Family Agency

Responding to Children families and communities across a range of help and support that a child and family may need





Dedicated and committed  
to working in partnership  
with children, families  
and communities

This Business Plan (2021) is produced in conjunction with Corporate Plan 2021 – 2023, Full detail of our services and the complex environment within which we operate can be found on pages 6 – 11 of our Corporate Plan.

# About this plan

## Welcome to Tusla Child and Family Agency's Business Plan 2021.

We are committed to driving improvements in our response to children, families and communities and we will work hard to achieve the goals and objectives as set out in our new Corporate Plan 2021 – 2023. This Business Plan is the first of three Business Plans which will drive the implementation of our Corporate Plan.

Produced under Section 46 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 and reflecting on the Performance Statement issued by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (CEDIY) this plan has been developed in conjunction with Corporate Plan 2021 – 2023 and sets out the actions we will undertake in 2021 to work toward achieving the goals we have established over the three years 2021 – 2023.

---

**Chapter One** of this plan details the Business Plan actions we will undertake in 2021. Our Business Plan actions are those which have been identified to drive a targeted improvement or increased activity. Throughout this Chapter, you will see a Year One Target or Activity Measure aligned to that which is set out in our Corporate Plan. **Appendix 1** of this plan, details actions which are related to the objective and support the overall achievement of our goals and objectives. The cumulation of all these actions will drive improvements in our services for the benefit of those we serve.

---

**Chapter Two** sets out our Financial Framework within which we will operate in 2021 in terms of the overall funding provided and financial governance of same, financial reporting, the impact of 2020 cost pressures and the expected 2021 cost pressures. It also sets out the prioritised initiatives in 2021 and their links to our goals and objectives, the capital expenditure plan, and the financial risks that the Agency faces in 2021.

---

**Chapter Three** outlines the priorities for Tusla Human Resources (HR) for 2021 to achieve the actions as set out in year one of the Tusla Corporate Plan 2021–2023. It also incorporates the HR priorities requested through the Minister for CEDIYs **Performance Statement**, along with the high-level priorities for the Agency in 2021.

---

### Monitoring

We will monitor progress of this plan through a quarterly review of our Business Plan actions, bi-monthly performance conferences and through monitoring our **performance indicators and metrics**.

As you go through this plan, there will be times that we will refer to terms or acronyms which are specific to our services. These will be highlighted throughout this plan; the glossary in **Appendix 2** will explain these terms. This plan, along with Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023 is available on our website at [www.tusla.ie/publications](http://www.tusla.ie/publications).



# Chapter 1:

## Business Plan Actions & Activity 2021

This Chapter sets out the Business Plan actions which we have identified as those which will drive a targeted improvement or increased activity and support the improvements we are pursuing through our goals and objectives. Some Business Plan actions detailed in this chapter may encompass a number of actions which together support achieving a specific target or activity measure. Where you see the \* symbol, this will denote that these detailed actions can be found in Appendix 1 of this plan under the number of the relevant objective.

01

### Ensure children, young people, families and communities receive a consistent, quality and integrated response from all our services

1.1 Embed and develop a consistent national approach to practice across all our response pathways			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.1(a)*	Continue to embed the National approach to practice across the Child Protection & Welfare (CPW) <b>response pathways</b> and examine the key interface points with and the Early intervention and Alternative Care Response Pathways to ensure integrated and consistent practice approaches across the country	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 % reduction in CPW Waiting Lists <b>(T)</b></li> <li>3% increase in compliance in national standards <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
1.1(b)*	Ensure cohesive and integrated supports to vulnerable groups including separated children seeking asylum, survivors of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV), Traveller and Roma Communities and LGBTI+.	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A further 28 children supported under the IRPP <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>Strategic Review of Emergency Domestic Violence Accommodation completed <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>Implement 2021 Actions under the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 - 2021 <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
1.2. Continue to implement quality assurance and service improvement systems across our response pathways			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.2(a)*	Implement a standardised quality and risk governance structure for operational services aligned from area to regional to national levels	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3% increase in compliance with national standards <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
1.2(b)*	Design and implement a new <b>Practice Audit Framework</b>	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3% increase in compliance with national standards <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
1.3. Support permanency planning for children and young people in care support our carers and care providers to provide safe and nurturing homes for children that promote lifelong relationships			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.3(a)*	Ensure children in care have a care plan that is promoting permanency	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3% increase in compliance with national standards <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
1.3(b)*	Improve the availability and quality of aftercare services available to young people	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 % reduction in the number of young people awaiting an aftercare service <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
1.4. Work collaboratively with other agencies to investigate, assess, and support children, young people and adults who have been abused			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.4(a)*	Plan for the extension of the <b>Barnahus Model</b> to Cork and Dublin	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation Plans completed <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
1.4(b)*	Identify and map an <b>integrated service network</b> of counselling and therapeutic supports for children and families who have been harmed or abused	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated service network identified and mapped <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
1.5. Safeguard children and young people from potential harm by sharing necessary and proportionate information with others			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.5(a)*	Implement an effective and safe system to investigate and determine an outcome to allegations of child abuse under the <b>Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)</b>	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10% reduction in CASP cases awaiting allocation <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> As set out in Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023

<sup>2</sup> As set out in Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023

<sup>3</sup> As set out in Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023

1.6. Continue to drive improvements in the health and safety of staff, our service users, and our compliance with our statutory and regulatory requirements			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.6(a)*	Develop a strategy to address incidents of Violence & Harassment in the Workplace	Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Leadership Team Approval of VHA Risk Management Process (AM)</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement and staff survey undertaken to inform statement of scale of VHA within the Agency. (AM)</li> </ul>
1.6(b)*	Develop and commence a national programme to roll out <b>site-specific safety statements</b> to all Tusla premises. This is to include an online system to manage Health and Safety mandatory training.	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28 site-specific Safety Statements in place (AM)</li> </ul>

1.7. Continue to ensure we have effective people, processes, and systems to support and meet our statutory and regulatory obligations when we process personal data			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
1.7(a)*	Implement Controls and Governance for <b>Third-Party Data Sharing Arrangements</b> . Undertake Data Sharing Agreements for high priority sharing arrangements on a risk and prioritisation basis.	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of prioritised DPIAs and DSAs as agreed by Executive GDPR Group on an ongoing risk prioritised basis. (AM)</li> </ul>
1.7(b)*	Through change management, training and communications create greater awareness of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) within the Agency.	Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number trained in “sharing data safely” (AM)</li> <li>Number of staff provided with targeted training as identified through DPIAs (AM)</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> The objective of planning for permanence is to ensure that children have a secure, stable, and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond (O'Brien and Conway, 2004)

<sup>5</sup> As set out in Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023

## 02

## Delivering an independent regulatory service focused on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through continuous improvement and partnership with stakeholders\*

2.1. Advance children's safety, development, and wellbeing by strengthening partnership and communications with stakeholders			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
2.1(a)*	Provide clear, useful, and accessible information for parents, guardians and carers to raise awareness about regulation, which supports informed choices	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host two webinars and publish regulatory explanatory guidance specific for parents (AM)</li> <li>Continued implementation Child Safeguarding Statement Plan: Year 4 of 5-year plan (AM)</li> </ul>
2.1(b)*	Work in partnership with Government, other state agencies, academia, representatives and their organisations to promote the safety, development, and wellbeing of children in the services we regulate	Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder Map agreed for Children's Services Regulation (CSR) and priority stakeholders identified (AM)</li> </ul>
2.2. Ensure that we have effective systems and we can identify where regulated services are not meeting the required standard			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
2.2(a)*	To predict and respond to services appropriately by building systems that are underpinned by regulatory intelligence	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All high risk rated Early Years Services are inspected in 2021 (T)</li> <li>10% reduction of the Home School Waiting List (T)</li> <li>All Early Years services are inspected at least once over the three-year registration cycle (T)</li> <li>Each Private Residential Centre at a minimum will receive an annual inspection (T)</li> </ul>
2.2(b)*	Use the full range of our enforcement powers to support regulatory compliance by taking action in a proportionate, effective, and persuasive way	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of outstanding 2019 pre-school re-registration submissions finalised (AM)</li> <li>100% all initial School Age Childcare applications registered or closed (AM)</li> </ul>
2.3. Provide information, guidance, and support to regulated services to enable them to meet their requirements			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
2.3(a)*	Work with stakeholders to improve the sector's understanding of regulation	Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of an e-Learning programme (AM)</li> </ul>
2.3(b)*	Provide clear, targeted, and accessible information for <b>Registered Providers</b> to improve understanding of regulatory requirements	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish two Industry Guidance Notes for Early Years Inspectorate and Alternative Care Inspection and Monitoring Service (AM)</li> </ul>

03

Ensure that our staff and leaders are supported and empowered to continuously learn and improve so that children, families and communities benefit from our service

3.1. Assess, action, and review the embedding of our revised values and behaviours and ensure that we implement the Public Sector Duty on Equality and Human Rights.			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
3.1(a)*	Establish an Agency-wide peer-nominated group of 'Values Leaders' of all grades to design a behaviours awareness programme 'Visible Values'.	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of Value Leaders nominated across the system (AM)</li> </ul>
3.1(b)*	Implement the Public Sector Duty Framework	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation Plan established (AM)</li> </ul>
3.2. Develop and implement a strategic plan for the Agency that drives increased research in the evaluation of outcomes, and we will commission prioritised research projects			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
3.2(a)*	Develop the Research Strategic Plan	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Strategic Plan Developed (AM)</li> </ul>
3.2(b)*	Following the outcome of a joint Tusla / DCEDIY Working group, a recommendation will be made to the Minister on how the need for longitudinal research into the lives and experiences of children in care and leaving care, identified in the Ryan Report Implementation Plan will be best met	Q4	
3.3. Develop a sustainable workforce where our employees are recruited, retained, and supported to have the required knowledge skills and competencies to deliver high quality and integrated services			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
3.3(a)*	Develop a Capability Framework that defines the skills, knowledge and abilities required for roles and supports our employees through continuous improvement and change	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tusla Capability Framework requirements scoped (AM)</li> </ul>
3.3(b)*	Develop multi-annual Workforce Plans, focusing on supply, recruitment, retention, and talent management to ensure we have the workforce required to deliver high quality integrated services	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% in variance from Affordable Pay Numbers (T)</li> <li>&gt;65% of graduates recruited (AM)</li> <li>Reduce absenteeism target by 0.5% to 5% (T)</li> <li>Higher retention target 95% (T)</li> </ul>
3.4. Encourage, promote, and support shared learning across the Agency and continuous professional development for our staff			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
3.4(a)*	Develop Tusla's capacity as a learning organisation, through shared learning and continuous professional development	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher retention target 95% (T)</li> <li>Upward trend in the number of staff engaging in training and sharing forums (AM)</li> </ul>
3.5. Enhance Tusla local, regional, and national performance system using meaningful measures that promote improved outcomes for the people we serve			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
3.5(a)*	Development of a national service performance and improvement system to promote improved outcomes for service users	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 bi-monthly performance conferences held (AM)</li> <li>Project Plan for the development of an Operational Service Performance and Improvement System in place (AM)</li> <li>Agreed definition of an Outcomes Framework (AM)</li> <li>Consultation on development of outcomes indicators completed (AM)</li> </ul>
3.5(b)*	Improve the use and quality of data available to the Agency from assurance systems	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised Risk Management Policy (AM)</li> <li>Revised Protected Disclosures Policy (AM)</li> <li>Revised Incident Management Policy and Guidance (AM)</li> <li>5% increase in the target for closed complaints resolved locally (T)</li> <li>0 complaint recorded as open &gt;12 months (T)</li> </ul>

## Ensure our local teams and services are facilitated and supported by national systems and resources that promote integration and accountability

4.1. Establish a National Executive Management Team and Six Regional Service Areas and integrate national services into the revised regional governance structures			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
4.1(a)*	Establish National <b>Executive Management Team</b> and Six Regional Services Areas	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval Q1/Recruitment Q2/Completion Q4 <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.1(b)*	Review national services and plan for integration into local services in line with TUSLA Reform Programme	Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All national operational services mapped to regional services in line with the National Delivery Framework <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.2. Strengthen interagency forums at local and national level (including HSE & An Garda Síochána)			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
4.2(a)*	Work with An Garda Síochána (AGS) and HSE to develop effective solutions to meet the needs of children and families	Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGS notification metric development <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>100% of children in care with a disability will be funded in line with the HSE and Tusla Joint protocol 2020 <b>(T)</b></li> </ul>
4.2(b)*	Work with community and <b>interagency fora</b> to ensure a better alignment of priorities and commissioned resources	Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope and Pilot Children and Young Peoples Service Committees Integrated Reporting Framework in 4 Areas <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>Each Area Management Team supported to develop their 2021 – 2023 Area Commissioning Plans <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.3. Implement the ICT and Data Management Strategies			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
4.3(a)*	Continue the Implementation of the ICT Strategy (2021 - 2023)	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% of all ICT service requests completed within SLA response times <b>(T)</b></li> <li>Digital transformation completed for 60% of the processing activities linked to Fostering, CASP, Residential Services, Children Services Regulation and TESS <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>Completion of 2021 actions of the ICT Strategies <b>(AM)</b></li> <li>Complete 5.55m capital investment in ICT <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.3(b)*	Continue the Implementation of the Data Management Strategy (2019 - 2022)	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data management plans developed for CP&amp;W, CiC, CASP and Residential Services <b>(T)</b></li> <li>50% of the Agency's KPIs automatically reported <b>(T)</b></li> <li>Completion of all the 2021 actions of the Data Management Strategies <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.4. Ensure the effective management of our agency's financial resources			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
4.4(a)*	To plan and prepare for the deployment of the <b>Integrated Financial Management System</b>	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% variance from overall budgets <b>(T)</b></li> <li>Complete and agree IFMS Deployment Plan document with Board <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.4(b)*	Ensuring Financial Compliance through the continued development of a culture of awareness, understanding and application of financial governance requirements across Tusla and the Community and Voluntary Sector who provides services on behalf of Tusla	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a revised Review of Effective Internal Control Process and Improvement Action Plan <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>
4.5. Provide fit for purpose accommodation for the provision of safe and quality services			
Ref#	Business Plan Action	Due	Year 1 Target (T)/Activity Measure (AM)
4.5(a)*	Deliver Estates and ICT Capital and Lease Plan as set out in Business Plan Capital Expenditure Table (Page 22)	Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of Estates and ICT Capital and Lease Plan for 2021 <b>(AM)</b></li> </ul>

# Chapter 2:

## Financial Framework

### Overview

This section sets out the financial framework within which the Agency will operate in 2021. It also sets out the prioritised initiatives in 2021, the capital expenditure plan and the financial risks that the Agency faces for 2021.

The Agency received an additional €44.293 million for 2021 and it is expected services will be delivered within this envelope provided no significant unexpected challenges arising. The Agency will continue to implement tight controls to manage its allocation effectively.

The Agency will maintain good oversight on the management of the allocation to ensure that there is the least possible risk of overspend in 2021. Tusla will consult with the Minister and his Department officials to agree on any measures for corrective action, regarding compliance with statutory obligations and service delivery proposals.

### Overall Funding for 2021

#### Net Non-Capital Determination

The Agency's gross non-capital determination for 2021 is €881.331 million. This will be funded, in part by an estimated €16,780 million in appropriation in aid income from superannuation and pension-related deductions. Therefore, the Agency's net non-capital determination for 2021 is €864.551 million.

The indicative make-up of the 2021 additional financial allocation in respect of Gross Non-capital is outlined in Table 1, Financial Allocation in respect of Revenue 2021:

**Table 1: Financial Allocation in respect of Revenue for 2021**

Category	Source	Allocation
Pay		333.556
Foster Care and other allowances		122.294
Private Residential and Foster Care		155.818
Legal		29.994
Grant Arrangements		170.637
Other Non-pay		69.032
Gross Non-Capital Allocation	DCEDIY Subhead A.3: €840.766m DES: €35.005m Early Years Subhead B.4: €5.560m	881.331
Appropriation in Aid		-16.780
Net Non-Capital Allocation		864.551



### TESS/ AEARS funding change

The allocation for 2021 includes an amount of €35.005m for the funding of Tusla Education Support Service (TESS/AEARS) and Schools Completion Programme (SCP) which has been changed from Vote 40 to the Department of Education (Vote 26). For 2021, however, the services for TESS/AEARS and SCP will continue to be delivered by Tusla.

The Gross Non-Capital allocation under the DCEDIY A3 in 2020 after the supplementary allocation of €20m was €821.978 million and in 2021 the A3 Subhead will be €840.766 million; the change being made up of an additional allocation of €44.293 million, a transfer in of €9.5 million from the B7 subhead re ABC (Area Based Childcare Programme) and PPFS (Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme) and a transfer out of €35.005million to Department Education (Vote 26). This is set out in Table 2 below. The additional €44.293 million is made up from an increase in core funding of €39.293 million plus a transfer of €5m funding relating to IRPP (Irish Refugee Protection Programme).

### Sub Head B4 – Early Years

Funding of €5.560 million was also provided under Early Years Subhead B4 for 2021 which is an increase of €0.505 million over the €5.055 million provided in 2020.

### Capital Provision

Provision has also been made for capital expenditure by the Agency during 2021 up to a maximum of €18.676 million; this is made up of A3 Capital funding for 2021 of €17.194 million plus an allowable carryover of capital expenditure from other areas of DCEDIY Vote 40 Capital budget of €1.482 million.

### Technical adjustment to move funding from Sub Head B7

€9.5 million is included in the A3 allocation for 2021 relating to funding for ABC and PPFS. As this funding was in place in 2020 it is shown as a technical adjustment in table 2 to give a revised budget for 2020.

**Table 2: Revised opening A3 Funding for 2021**

#### A3 - Opening Budget Movement 2020 to 2021

		Total	Pay	Non-Pay	Income
		€M	€M	€M	€M
Rebased Budget	Budget 2020	801.978	308.852	496.260	-3.133
	Supplementary Budget 2020	20.000	0.400	19.600	
	Revised Budget 2020	821.978	309.252	515.860	-3.133
	Transfer from B7 ABC and PPFS	9.500	0.260	9.240	
	Transfer to Dept of Education Vote	-35.005	-8.609	-26.396	
	Rebased Budget	796.473	300.903	498.704	-3.133

## Expected Outturn for 2020

### Projected Outturn

The Agency is projecting an overspend of c. €23m for 2020 based on its accruals-based management accounting. This incorporates projected spending on Covid 19 of c.€7 m in 2020, which was not budgeted in the Business Plan 2020. Technical timing differences between the Vote accounting base and the accrual accounting base mean the cash overspend in 2020 is estimated at €28m.

The Agency had indicated that it was facing an overspend of €27.163 million in its Business Plan for 2020. This was due to the service pressures being experienced mainly to Residential Costs for children in care. The current forecasted outturn for the Agency is lower than that projected in the Business Plan when the impact of Covid 19 costs are excluded.

### Savings Achieved

The Agency set out to achieve cost savings of €4m (excluding 4m re Disability receivable from HSE) in 2020. Recurring cost savings in excess of €3 million have been achieved through the successful conversion of 408 Agency Staff to specific purpose contract staff. An additional recurring €1 million was achieved through administrative savings, thereby meeting the 2020 targets. Further savings of €4m have been achieved in travel and subsistence costs which can be attributed to Covid 19 on a once off basis in 2020, resulting in €8m savings in 2020.

### Impact of Covid-19

The Agency is predicting that it will directly outlay c.7 million in 2020 for Covid-19 related costs. Much of the expenditure was to support Community & Voluntary Agencies that were impacted by Covid-19. The impact of Covid-19 also yielded temporary savings in areas such as travel expenditure due to restrictions. It is not year clear what impact Covid-19 will have on the 2021 position. €8m in additional allocation was provided through Subhead A6 in 2020 to fund these additional costs.

**Table 3: Expected Outturn for 2020 (Before Supplementary Funding)**

2020 Full-Year Forecast					
Type of Expenditure	Summary Category	Annual Forecast (€m)	Annual Budget (€m)	Annual Variance (€m)	Forecast Variance (%)
Pay	Agency	12.938	0.000	12.938	
	On Payroll	287.401	303.260	-15.859	-5%
	Pension Pay	9.978	11.123	-1.147	-10%
Pay Total		310.316	314.385	(4.068)	-1%
	Foster Care and Other Allowances	117.660	117.155	0.505	0%
	Grants	180.162	176.160	4.002	2%
	Legal	30.383	28.730	1.653	6%
	Other Non-pay	50.483	53.364	(2.882)	-5%
	Private Residential and Foster Care	146.555	116.673	29.882	26%
	Staff Travel	8.684	14.022	(5.338)	-38%
Non-Pay Total		533.926	506.105	27.822	5%
Income Total		-19.159	-18.511	(0.648)	4%
Superannuation/PRD Income Total		-16.380	-16.380	0.000	0%
Net Expenditure		808.703	785.598	23.105	3%

### Pay Costs

The forecast underspend arises due to normal time-related savings due to staff commencement dates as well as from savings which accrued following the successful conversion of 408 agency staff to temporary direct contracts and due to an underspend on pensions in the year. There is no budget allocated for agency pay costs therefore any expenditure on agency staff is recorded as an overspend.

### Grants to Outside Agencies

A once-off additional €4.4 million was allocated to Community and Voluntary Agencies in 2020 due to pressures experienced by them in relation to Covid 19, including funding of €2 million to the Domestic Violence refuges and agencies to specifically support these services. Additional funding has been provided for the DSGBV sector in 2021 as set out by the Minister in the Performance Statement.

### Legal

Legal costs at €30.383 million are projected to be overspent against a budget of €28.730 million by €1.653 million in 2020. The significant cost pressure in Legal has been in the areas of GAL related costs and third-party legal costs which are directed by the Courts.

### Guardian Ad Litem Costs

Expenditure on the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Service is projected at €14.171 million (GAL costs €7.872 million, GAL Solicitor costs €5.057 million and GAL Counsel costs €1.242 million) for 2020. This expenditure has been demanded as the service is commissioned by the Courts. Tusla pays the providers but does not control the commissioning.

### Other Non-pay

The forecast underspend is €2.882 million and is broadly down to lower costs in some areas due to Covid 19 including lower office costs due to home working, lower training costs, less patient/client transport costs and reduced expenditure on external supports.

### Residential Care Provision

Children with increasingly complex needs are coming into care and this has created additional demand for specialist residential care placements for these children. Numbers in both private residential and private foster care placements have continued to increase in 2020. In 2020 the impacts of the increase in the contract rate for Private Residential placements from October 2018 onward together with the ongoing delay in the funding arrangements with HSE for disability cases and significant investment in local care arrangements have all contributed to a cost pressure of €29.882 million in 2020 (before the effect of any allocation of supplementary funding in 2020). Supplementary funding of €19.6 million in 2020 has been allocated to offset against this expenditure.

### Staff Travel

Staff travel costs in 2020 are forecast to be under budget by €5.338m which is due to the effect of Covid 19 travel restrictions and the acceleration of remote/home working and the use on online meetings brought about by Covid 19. It is expected that these costs will trend upwards as staff return to more normal work cycles, although savings are expected as digital solutions will replace some in-person meetings.



# 2021 Budget Plan

The Budget Plan for 2021 is to provide funding across the following key areas:

- €13.6m will be allocated to address the Existing Level of Service (ELS) deficit. This is the full year cost of initiatives commenced in 2020 or existing overspends not met by the additional funding in 2020. This is principally in the areas of Private Residential, Aftercare allowances, and Legal spend.
- €5.6m will be allocated to address Pay Agreements and Pensions. This is to meet the cost of the 2% pay awards made in October 2020 and the ongoing costs of pensions for staff who have retired or will do so in 2021.
- €5.0m will be allocated to increase funding under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) which will take additional children into Tusla's care in 2021 in line with Government's commitment.
- An additional €18.7m will be allocated to address demographic and unmet need for services provided by the Agency. Included in this are the following measures:
  - €7.0m for an additional 100 frontline staff
  - €4.8m for commitments made to the DSGBV sector
  - €1.9m to address accommodation needs at service area level
  - €4.0 to support additional residential services
- An additional €4.3m will be allocated to address new developments across ICT, GDPR, Organisation Reform and to facilitate the transfer of mother-and-baby home records to Tusla.
- The DCEDIY and the Department of Health agreed a protocol in October 2020 relating to the care and related share of expenditure for Children who have a diagnosis of Moderate and Severe Disability between HSE and Tusla. An associated savings target of €3.0m has been included for 2021.

**Table 4: A3 Allocation of Funding**

## A3 - Budget Movement 2020 to 2021

		Total	Pay	Non-Pay	Income
		€M	€M	€M	€M
Rebased Budget	Budget 2020	801.978	308.852	496.260	-3.133
	Supplementary Budget 2020	20.000	0.400	19.600	
	Revised Budget 2020	821.978	309.252	515.860	-3.133
	Transfer from B7 ABC and PPFS	9.500	0.260	9.240	
	Transfer to Dept of Education Vote	-35.005	-8.609	-26.396	
	Rebased Budget	796.473	300.903	498.704	-3.133
Budget Allocation 2021	ELS for 2020 outlay	13.619		13.619	
	Pay agreements and Pensions	5.674	5.674		
	EU Refugee Programme	5.000	1.138	3.862	
	Demographic & Unmet Need	18.741	10.247	8.494	
	New Developments	4.259	1.814	2.445	
	Savings Target	-3.000		-3.000	
	New 2021 Allocation	44.293	18.873	25.420	0.000
2021 A3 Allocation		840.766	319.776	524.124	-3.133

# Financial Risk Areas

The Agency is committed to delivering its services within the allocation provided to it for 2021. However, the nature of the services being provided means that the safety and care of any child at risk will be the predominant factor in determining expenditure decisions. Effective service delivery and the planned pace of reform are dependent on sufficient resources being available and the additional resources being provided to the Agency for 2021 are very welcome and will help significantly in the continuous efforts to improve the care and services being provided by Tusla to vulnerable children and families in our society.

The key financial risk areas for the Agency in 2021 are set out below:

## Delivery of Services within Allocation

The Agency will maintain strong oversight on the management of the Allocation to ensure that there is the least possible risk of overspend in 2021. Tusla will consult with the Minister and his Department officials to agree on any measures for corrective action, regarding compliance with statutory obligations and service delivery proposals, should the risk of an overspend arise.

## Covid 19 and Community and Voluntary Organisations

The Agency is conscious that the Covid 19 pandemic has created significant operational challenges for individual organisations that may impact on core services in 2021. Whilst Tusla is conscious of the ongoing challenges, it has only been possible to create a small contingency fund of €1m to support any once-off allocations that may be required in 2021.

## Pay

Tusla has put in place a Pay and Numbers Strategy to identify WTE ceilings with requisite pay budget allocation for each of Tusla's Service Regions/Areas, National Services and Corporate Directorates. The affordable WTE target for 2021 has been estimated at 4,992 WTE. This target will act as the high-level control on pay cost and number in 2021 to ensure the Agency lives within its pay allocation.

**Pension costs** may be driven by higher numbers of staff retirements than are budgeted for in 2021. These costs cannot readily be controlled in terms of financial performance and are difficult to accurately predict. This plan has been prepared on the basis that pension-related funding issues will be dealt with separately from the general resource available for service provision.

**Residential Services:** As demand for residential placements remains high, it is difficult to predict and control expenditures across this Demand Led service. The overspend in 2020 was largely a function of the demand increase for this service in 2020 and previous years. The Agency has provided resources to cover ELS to the end of 2020 and provision to cover a small expected increase in numbers in 2021. However, if a significant increase in this demand-led service is experienced in 2021, then funding changes to other service commitments would be required to ensure the Agency remains within budget.

Each placement in Private Residential now costs in excess of €300k per annum and each placement in Private Foster Care costs in excess of €50k per annum. In 2020 the IGEEES published an in-depth review of the costs associated with the service and this report is available on the link attached. <https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tusla-Residential-Care-Costs.pdf>.

**Disability Services:** Tusla has continued to pay for the placements of children and young adults who have a diagnosis of Moderate to Severe Disability and were or are in the care of Tusla. An agreement was reached between the DCEDIY and Department of Health in 2020 for HSE to provide funding to the amount of €5.5m to Tusla for these placements. In addition, all new cases where a child taken into care has a diagnosis of Moderate to Severe Disability are to be funded on a 50/50 basis by HSE and Tusla. The implementation of this agreement will be progressed with HSE colleagues for 2021. However, as the agreement is dependent on funding being available within HSE resources this may be a restriction on the amount that can be available to Tusla in 2021.

**IRPP Programme:** Tusla has been allocated an additional €5m for agreed new placements under this programme in 2021 and ELS funding has been used to fund the deficit from 2020. Tusla will maximise this new funding to accommodate children who come to Ireland through this programme. As the cost of each placement is similar to that of Residential Services, placements above the affordable number would generate significant financial deficits.

**Aftercare Services:** Tusla is committing over €35.0 million to Aftercare services. Much of this investment supports vulnerable young adults leaving care who are impacted by any disability, addiction, or mental health issues as well as the vulnerabilities experienced by children who have spent their young lives in the care of the state. Many of the young adults being supported, would become homeless if these supports were not available. The Covid-19 crisis has meant that they are remaining in aftercare for longer than would otherwise be expected, resulting in higher costs. The risk of Homelessness is also a consideration that leads to these young adults remaining in care.

**Psychology Services:** The Agency has continued to pay the HSE for psychology services amounting to €7 million annually. Tusla also purchases therapy services at a cost of an additional c. €4 million in 2020, which is expected to continue into 2021.

Guardian Ad Litem costs are determined by individual Court decisions and result in a demand-led expenditure which must be met by the Agency. There is a risk that the expenditure for GALs will exceed allocated budget due to its unpredictable nature.

Payments to the State Claims Agency for the cost of managing and settling claims that arose in previous years may be made by Tusla in 2021. These payments are of a legal and technical nature and the business plan does not provide for any expenditure under this heading as there is no budget yet in place to cover this expenditure.

**Increased ICT expenditure:** Significant investment was made in new systems, mobility enablement, connectivity, equipment, and data management in line with the Agency's ICT and Data Management Strategies. The impact of this is increased operating costs that could be in the order of €1.5 million for 2021.

Due to a historical lack of investment in ICT, some payment processes are manual and therefore have increased risk due to manual controls and lack of automation. The Agency has identified this high risk and has put in place mitigating controls over these Areas. Some of these issues are expected to be resolved by the move to best practice processes under the new IFMS financial system though this will not go live before April 2022.

**HSE Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issues:** The MOU with HSE regarding the sharing of services recognises that Tusla was not set up with the required corporate infrastructure that would be required to provide the supports to effectively govern and administer an organisation of its size. Whilst Tusla has grown since 2014, its central infrastructure for ICT, Financial, Procurement, HR and Estates services remains heavily dependent on HSE.

**Data caveats and other assumptions:** The financial information underpinning the plan is subject to the specific limitations of the HSE financial systems which are subject to documented limitation. Every effort has been made within the time and resources available to ensure that the estimates provided in the plan are as accurate as possible at time of preparation of Plan. However, it must be read in the above context and it is noted that a margin of error of as little as 0.5% equates to €4.4 million in net expenditure terms for the Agency.

# Capital Expenditure

The 2021 capital allocation is intended in the first instance to meet existing contractual commitments entered into under previous Capital Plans as well as proposed future service requirements.

## Capital Plan Priorities 2021

Capital Plan priorities for 2021 have been developed in recent months. It is important to note that commitments already exist in respect of on-going capital projects entered into in 2019 or earlier, such as major refurbishment projects at St. Finbar's, Portlaoise and St. Joseph's, Limerick, as well as certain minor capital projects which will not be fully paid for until early 2021.

An ambitious capital programme is proposed as part of the Tusla Estates Strategy, which was approved by the Board in 2019, and provision is made for the initial funding of such projects under the general heading of "Estates Strategy". Annual capital programmes are also provided for, i.e. the Minor Capital Programme (which includes statutory compliance, condition monitoring, infrastructural risk, reactive works, and asset management), and the on-going Equipping Programme. There is insufficient capacity in the 2021 capital allocation for

vehicle replacement, but this is something that will have to be considered for inclusion in future allocations. While Tusla's fleet has been extensively modernised during the past five years, some vehicles will shortly be due for replacement.

Formal engagement with DCEDIY commenced in 2020 concerning the funding of the Estates Strategy, and this will continue in 2021, particularly in the context of the NDP review as proposed in the Programme for Government. It is hoped that this review will present an opportunity for the recognition of Tusla's considerable accommodation needs, and for the allocation of meaningful levels of capital funding in future years. The Estates Strategy provides a strategic overview of the key infrastructural developments required to support and enhance the delivery of the agency's services in the future.

The 2021 capital plan will also support the continued investment in digitisation and innovation initiatives delivered under the Tusla ICT and Data Management Strategies. The key proposed capital developments for 2021 are summarised in Table 5.

**Table 5: Capital Developments**

Area	Item	2021 €'m
<b>Estates</b>	Minor Capital/Infrastructural Risk	3.000
<b>Estates</b>	St. Joseph's, Limerick, Phase 1	2.800
<b>Estates</b>	St. Joseph's, Limerick, Phase 2	1.500
<b>Estates</b>	St. Fintan's, Portlaoise	1.800
<b>Estates</b>	Extension to Tusla premises, Carlow	0.300
<b>Estates</b>	Equipping	1.000
<b>Estates</b>	Purchase of CRS houses	1.450
<b>Estates</b>	Accommodation for unaccompanied minors	0.700
<b>Estates</b>	Barnahus project, Galway	0.382
<b>Estates</b>	Estates Strategy – new projects	0.194
<b>Estates Sub Total</b>		<b>13.126</b>
<b>ICT</b>	Infrastructure	2.500
<b>ICT</b>	Applications (App Development & App Procurement)	2.000
<b>ICT</b>	Data Management and Analytics	0.350
<b>ICT</b>	Annual key project initiatives	0.700
<b>ICT Sub Total</b>		<b>5.550</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>18.676</b>

# Finance Priorities 2021

A key driver for financial process and technology improvement in the coming years will be the implementation of IFMS (Integrated Financial Management System). This move to one financial system for the whole of the HSE and Tusla will make use of the latest SAP financial software technology and be based on processes designed in accordance with best practice. Tusla are in the first group of entities for deployment and the implementation work plan will involve design confirmation, build and test of the system by the HSE Project Team and System Integrator in early 2021, and planned deployment preparation by Tusla in the first half of 2021, planned deployment commencing in July/August 2021 and a planned go-live date in April 2022.

It is a continuing priority for 2021 for Finance to work with our ICT colleagues to make the best use of technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of financial processing within the Agency.

In line with principles set out in the Finance Strategy, Finance intends to refine the Directorates operating model in 2021 to be responsive to the requirements of the Agency in an environment of Organisational restructuring planned by the CEO.

The importance of the Finance Directorates key resource, it's skilled and knowledgeable staff, will remain a key focus in 2021 in terms of training and personal development.

The Finance function will continue to invest in improving the overall financial governance of the Agency in 2021.

## Financial Profiling and Reporting

Tusla will continue to report on expenditure against budget and cash flow throughout 2021. Tusla will submit to the DCEDIY, a 2021 budget profile broken down by week and month, in line with the approved level of expenditure, detailing gross, Appropriations in Aid and other income.

In 2021, particular attention will continue to be paid to the separation of the pay and non-pay profiles, including identification of temporary staff requirements (agency costs) within the profiles. Detailed workings will be done to accurately estimate the expenditure/drawdowns occurring under both categories, having regard to timing and commitments.

In 2021, Tusla will continue to provide monthly and weekly reports to the DCEDIY setting out spending to date. These reports will highlight variances from the start of year profile and identify emerging cost pressures. A narrative setting out the context and explanation for any variances from cash profiles will also be provided.

Tusla will also submit a monthly budget profile for 2021 to the Department of Education in respect of the €35.005 funding for TESS/SCP and AEARS and will report on a monthly basis on spending to date.

### Financial Governance Improvements for 2021

The Agency has set out an assessment of its Internal Controls in the Statement on Internal Control in the Annual Financial Statements for 2019. The Statement on Internal Control sets out measures that the Agency is taking to address control issues across the Agency. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in his report on the 2019 Financial Statements drew attention to Non-Compliant Procurement and the incurring of fines imposed by the Data Protection Commission for data breaches by the Agency. Work will continue in 2021 to improve controls in these areas.

# Procurement Priorities

Public procurement is a high-risk activity due to the volume and regularity of purchases, and the complex nature of processes to procure services within the Agency. Strategic and operational risks, such as inefficiencies in the tendering process, delays in delivery or substandard contract performance, can undermine the achievement of objectives. In addressing the known areas of non-compliance, the Agency will consider the following actions in 2021:

- Develop Procurement Plan for 2021 to 2023
- Recruit additional resources to support the function
- Training staff in Procurement rules and procedures
- Supporting the implementation of the IFMS system
- Developing an interim database of procurement information
- Supporting strategic procurement projects
- Managing the external stakeholder relationships with HSE and OGP





### The following additional actions will be carried out in 2021:

- Review of Pilot Bursary Scheme in NUI Maynooth.
- Proposal to support social care staff to return to education with a view to retaining to become social workers.
- Cross-border initiatives will continue to include social work students from Northern Ireland.
- In consultation with CORU and building on positive engagement fostered in 2020 on their registration requirements, HR will explore international recruitment opportunities to attract social work graduates from other jurisdictions.
- Tusla will work in partnership with DCEDIY to engage with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to support the inclusion of Social Worker on the critical occupations skills list.
- In 2021 along with the Department of Health Cross-Sectoral Group Tusla will continue to engage with the 18-month implementation Plan for the wider Health & Social Care Strategic Workforce Planning Agenda which was impacted and delayed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. This will support the identification of priority workforce planning projects along with the development of processes for engagement between Health /Social Care and other sectors critical for the success of operationalising workforce planning.

### Capability

In 2021, HR in partnership and consultation with key stakeholders in the Agency will commence the initial scoping of a Capability Framework which will focus on the **job families** in both Social Care and Social Work. Through a robust project planning approach, we will develop an appropriate plan to support the implementation of these frameworks into the Agency. The detail of the core capabilities that apply to each of the job families will provide a sequence of progressive levels and detail for staff development.

The design of this Framework will ensure the Agency attracts, retains, and further develops a skilled and capable workforce which enhances and aligns the personal and collective effort with the strategic objectives of the Agency.

In 2021 HR will also further enhance their existing Regional and localised engagements.

HR will roll out programmes of engagements to support line managers in understanding and practicing HR Policies and Procedures. This will enhance the capability of line managers and ensure that there is a consistent application of HR Policies and Procedures – further developing relationships and proactive localised engagement.

In conjunction with Workforce Learning and Development, a further assessment of the training needs will be carried out to identify where the potential gaps in essential training are. This will allow actions to be taken to address where these needs are and in turn, should again ensure additional consistency at local and regional level in the delivery of good HR Policy and Procedure.

### Retention

In 2021 Human Resources in collaboration with Operations will establish Retention Working Groups at National and Regional/Service level which will have responsibility for the development National and Regional/Service specific action plans along with incorporating the key elements of the Retention Framework. Regional Retention Working Groups will provide focus on the specific challenges and trends arising locally. This targeted approach will optimise employee retention through set plans and actions and measure the effectiveness of interventions through key performance indicators.

This work will be underpinned by the establishment of a Retention Steering Group at National level with wide representation across the Agency to govern the implementation and effectiveness of the Retention Framework.

### Industrial Relations / Employee Relations

In 2021 HR will agree on our consultation policy to have a proactive engagement with staff partners at all levels. This policy will be developed and implemented throughout the Agency to ensure timely, proactive, and positive engagements internally and with our staff partners. These positive engagements will ensure that all matters are dealt with consistently through the appropriate forums and process.

### Tusla Staff Supports

Employee Health and Wellbeing, and Employee Assistance Programmes provide employee supports to enable all staff to reach and maintain their potential in the workplace and thus deliver a high quality of service.

As part of the Tusla Work Positive Framework 2018 - 2022 for Tusla, a key element includes the employment assistance service being further developed. This service is now available 24/7 for all Tusla employees and access is by phone and online. Tusla will support staff through the provision of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and the expansion of resilience training for staff and Critical stress management eLearning Programme which was developed in 2020. Additional peer to peer voluntary staff members training will be rolled out in 2021. This programme will be established and developed where appropriate. Tusla Health and Wellbeing intends to further develop rehabilitation programmes to facilitate staff returning to work in partnership with Occupational Health and line management.

### Workforce Planning

To achieve the key priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2021 – 2023 the Agency is required to recruit and retain appropriate levels of dedicated, experienced, and qualified staff to meet the resourcing requirements of the operational plans.

### Workforce Strategy

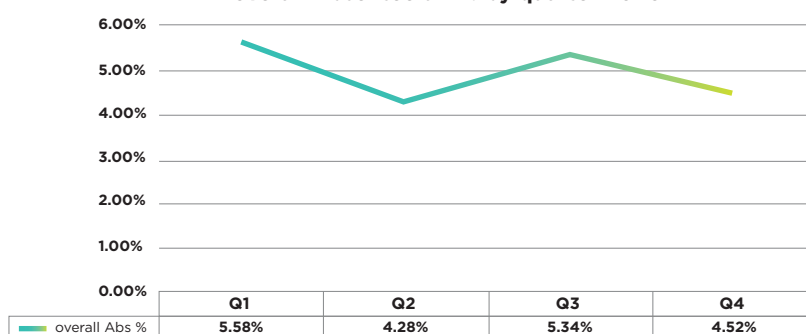
The Workforce Strategy 2021-2023 will be developed to outline the strategic workforce focus for the Agency for 2021-2023.

In 2020 Tusla established its Pay Number Strategy which set a WTE target of 4,784. Through enhanced controls and governance, the Agency maintained and maximised its WTE in line with the pay budget. WTE forecasting and monitoring against targets enhanced compliance and budgetary limits. Our reliance on agency staff was greatly reduced by the completion of an agency conversion which converted 408 staff to Tusla employees. In 2020 Tusla have maintained low levels of agency use to allow for emergency and shift dependency occurrences.

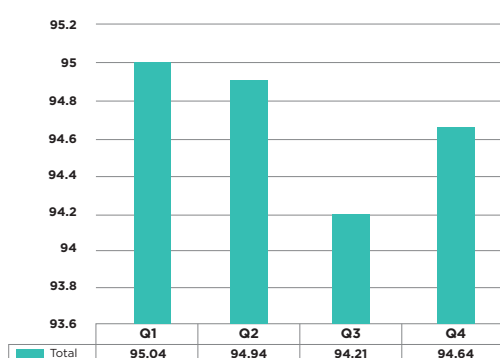
On 31st December 2020, Tusla had 4,796WTE (inclusive of agency) and although there was an increase of 12 WTE against our target of 4,784WTE, the Agency's remained within pay budget allocation. An increase in Pay budget for 2021 for Existing Levels of Service equates to approximately an additional 196WTE for 2021, therefore increasing our affordable pay number to 4,992WTE. In 2020 WTE targets were established at Regional Level and in 2021 Regional Service Directors will be responsible for the controls and governance of their WTE and pay budget.

In 2020 Tusla absenteeism rate ranged from 5.58% (Jan 2020) to 4.52% (Dec 2020), which when averaged over the year is 4.9% achieving the 2020 target of 5%. In 2021 Tusla aim to reduce this absenteeism rate further to 4.7% over the year. This absenteeism rate is inclusive of absences due to COVID-19.

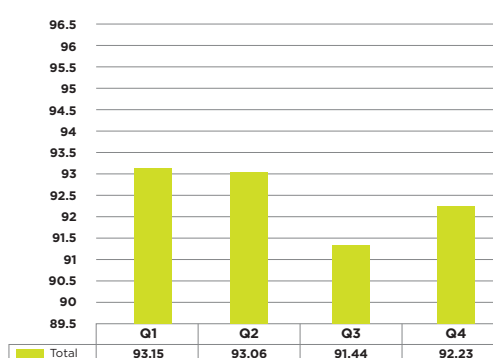
overall Absenteeism % by quarter 2020



Retention % by quarter 2020



Social Work Retention % by quarter 2020



Tusla's average retention rate for 2020 was 94.71%. Through existing and proposed initiatives, it is Tusla's aim to increase staff retention to a forecast target of 95% by end of Q4 2021. Whilst retention increased in most grade categories, this was not the case in social work which evidenced a decrease of 0.6% in the retention rate to 92.33% Q4 2020. Tusla aim to achieve the retention target set in 2021 of 93.39% by Q4 Dec 2021.

# Appendix 1 - Related Actions

This table outlines the actions which are either related to the Business Plan action as noted in Chapter 1, or those which are standalone actions (denoted by the abbreviation SA) which are actions which also support service improvements.

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
1.1. Embed and develop a consistent national approach to practice across all our response pathways	1.1(c)	<b>1.1(a)</b>	Continue and track the embedding of the national approach to practice (Signs of Safety) across Child Protection and Welfare response pathway	<b>Q4</b>
	1.1(d)		Review Service Delivery Framework to examine the key interface points between the CP&W response pathways and the Early intervention, Alternative Care, TESS and DSGBV Response Pathways to ensure integrated and consistent practice approaches across the country	<b>Q4</b>
	1.1(e)		Targeted resource allocation to priority areas to support improved performance	<b>Q1</b>
	1.1(f)		Ensure fulfilment of Ireland's commitment to receive a total of 36 children (28 to be received in 2021) from refugee camps in Greece, Separated Children Seeking Asylum and further develop parenting programmes to support families in International Protection accommodation	<b>Q4</b>
	1.1(g)	<b>1.1(b)</b>	Complete Strategic Accommodation Review of emergency domestic violence accommodation and further develop reporting mechanisms on services	<b>Q2</b>
	1.1(h)		Analyse current DSGBV data flows and systems across the sector and develop plans to ensure consistency and quality where appropriate	<b>Q4</b>
	1.1(i)		Implement the Tusla Actions for 2021 in the National Strategies for Traveller and Roma communities	<b>Q4</b>

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
1.2. Continue to implement quality assurance and service improvement systems across our response pathways	1.2(c)	<b>1.2(a)</b>	Develop a governance and oversight management report framework informed by NCCIS	<b>Q3</b>
	1.2(d)		Design and implement a new practice audit framework to include a ratings/grading system for recommendations from PASM audits to improve the communication and prioritisation of service improvement actions	<b>Q4</b>
	1.2(e)		Develop aligned governance structures and processes for the oversight of quality and risk in the national and regional operations services	<b>Q1</b>
	1.2(f)		Develop and implement an integrated clinical and business audit plan for Operational Services in 2021 and process for sharing learning across 17 Areas	<b>Q2</b>
	1.2(g)		Develop and implement a consistent approach to preparing for HIQA Inspections, sharing learning, and improving inspection outcomes across 17 areas	<b>Q2</b>
	1.2(h)		Strengthen governance of private alternative care services (fostering and residential services) at national and regional level to ensure children and young people experience a high quality of care	<b>Q4</b>
	1.2(i)	<b>1.2(b)</b>	Tracking and verification system for all service improvement/compliance plans arising from audit activity	<b>Q1</b>
	1.2(j)		Tracking and verification system for all service improvement/compliance plans arising from audit activity	<b>Q4</b>
	1.2(k)		Tracking and verification system for all service improvement/compliance plans arising from audit activity	<b>Q4</b>
	1.2(l)	<b>SA</b>	Promote service user involvement in the governance of the Agency	<b>Q4</b>
1.3. Support permanency planning for children and young people in care and support our carers and care providers to provide safe and nurturing homes for children that promote lifelong relationships	1.3(c)	<b>1.3(a)</b>	Consultation with Tusla staff and other key stakeholders, regarding national approach to practice for children in care and fostering services, will be completed	<b>Q2</b>
	1.3(d)		Publish <b>Permanency Planning Guidance</b> and brief all staff and carers on guidance	<b>Q4</b>
	1.3(e)		Ensure all care plans for children in care for more than 3 years have been reviewed and have considered a permanency option for the child's care plan	<b>Q1</b>
	1.3(f)		Ensure all children over 16 and eligible for adoption are prioritised for assessment	<b>Q2</b>

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
	1.3(g)	<b>1.3(b)</b>	Complete gap analysis of aftercare provision relating to young people turning 18 and those already eligible for an aftercare service	<b>Q2</b>
	1.3(h)	<b>SA</b>	The educational, vocational, and training opportunities for young people in care moving into adulthood will be increased with Tusla funded Way2Work apprenticeship/job opportunities programme and a regional education support post employed for children in care	<b>Q3</b>
	1.3(i)	<b>SA</b>	Publish policy and best practice in placing infants for adoption and ensure infants placed before 12months with Prospective Adoptive Parents	<b>Q2</b>
	1.3(j)	<b>SA</b>	Continue to recruit and retain foster carers	<b>Q4</b>
	1.3(k)	<b>SA</b>	Strengthen governance of private alternative care services (fostering and residential services) at national and regional level to ensure children and young people experience a high quality of care	<b>Q4</b>
	1.3(l)	<b>SA</b>	Tusla to finalise with the Department guidance to support voluntary open or semi-open adoption arrangements for adopted children	<b>Q2</b>
1.4. Work collaboratively with other agencies to investigate, assess, and support children, young people and adults who have been sexually abused	1.4(c)	<b>1.4(a)</b>	Extend the implementation of the Barnahus Model to Cork and Dublin in line with the Interdepartmental Governance Group Implementation Plan (including the development of interagency framework agreement for the sharing of data in the Barnahus process)	<b>Q4</b>
	1.4(d)		Ensure alignment of Barnahus Model to other areas of work e.g. CASP, Safety planning, therapeutic services for all children in need etc.	<b>Q4</b>
	1.4(e)	<b>1.4(a)</b>	Scope out the therapeutic services provided internally in Tusla, services provided by paid voluntary organisations through Tusla, other public bodies who provide therapeutic supports and other relevant services and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement	<b>Q3</b>
	1.4(f)		Analyse current pathways of service delivery for children harmed or abused and identify gaps	<b>Q3</b>
	1.4(g)		Develop a national framework for Therapeutic Service Provision in Tusla	<b>Q4</b>
Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
1.5. Safeguard children and young people from potential harm by sharing necessary and proportionate information with others	1.5(b)	<b>1.5(a)</b>	Finalise Policy and all associated Procedures associated with CASP	<b>Q2</b>
	1.5(c)		Implement CASP across all 17 areas	<b>Q4</b>
1.6. Continue to drive improvements in the health and safety of staff, our service users, and our compliance with our statutory and regulatory requirements	1.6(c)	<b>SA</b>	Design and implement a Health & Safety Governance, Compliance and Reporting Model across the Agency	<b>Q4</b>
	1.6(d)	<b>SA</b>	Support the Agency in the development of a prioritised programme of Health & Safety Policies to address areas of existing and emerging H&S risk across all services	<b>Q4</b>
	1.6(e)	<b>1.6(a)</b>	Agreement on agency-wide risk management process to manage violence, harm, and aggression	<b>Q1</b>
	1.6(f)		Engagement process commenced with organisational stakeholders with a National staff survey undertaken on the prevalence of Violence Harm and Aggression in the workplace	<b>Q2</b>
	1.6(g)		Planning for Cross-functional implementation teams will form part of core work of VHA Technical Group with Implementation design approved by the Senior Leadership Team	<b>Q4</b>
	1.6(h)		Planning for Steering Committees (e.g. membership, Terms of Reference) will form part of core work of VHA Technical Group with an Implementation plan approved by the Senior Leadership	<b>Q4</b>
	1.6(i)	<b>1.6(b)</b>	Design and implement a Health & Safety Governance, Compliance and Reporting Model across the Agency	<b>Q4</b>
	1.6(j)		Support the Agency in the development of a prioritised programme of Health & Safety Policies to address areas of existing and emerging H&S risk across all services	<b>Q4</b>

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
1.7. Continue to ensure we have effective people, processes, and systems to support and meet our statutory and regulatory obligations when we process personal data	1.7(d)	<b>SA</b>	Implement the agency-wide Service Support and Compliance Operating Model	<b>Q4</b>
	1.7(e)	<b>SA</b>	Implement the necessary actions to address the findings of the DPC and OIC inquiries	<b>Q4</b>
	1.7(f)	<b>SA</b>	Implement Controls and governance to embed Data Protection by Design and Default and support the completion of DPIAs on a risk and prioritisation basis	<b>Q4</b>
	1.7(g)	<b>1.7(a)</b>	We will embed the data protection impact assessment procedure within Tusla	<b>Q4</b>
	1.7(h)		We will identify high-risk areas of processing and we will minimise those risks to our service users as far and as early as possible	<b>Q4</b>
	1.7(i)	<b>1.7(b)</b>	Continued rollout of e-learning programme and GDPR “sharing data safely” training completed	<b>Q2</b>
	1.7(j)		Identified staff trained in high-risk data processing as approved and prioritised by Executive GDPR Group	<b>Q4</b>
2.1. Advance children's safety, development, and wellbeing by strengthening partnership and communications with stakeholders	2.1(c)	<b>2.1(a)</b>	Implementation of Revised Inspection Methodology to include parental views	<b>Q2</b>
	2.1(d)		Continue to progress the Child Safeguarding Statement 5-year plan (2018-2023)	<b>Q4</b>
	2.1(e)	<b>2.1(b)</b>	Develop and implement a CSR stakeholder engagement strategy	<b>Q2</b>
	2.1(f)		Establish Early Years Providers fora for multiples (provider has more than three services)	<b>Q3</b>
2.2. Ensure that we have effective systems and we can identify where regulated services are not meeting the required standard	2.2(c)	<b>2.2(a)</b>	Publish retrospective analysis of the findings from Early Years inspections	<b>Q2</b>
	2.2(d)		Develop a Quality Management System for the Early Years Inspectorate aligned to ISO9000:2015	<b>Q4</b>
	2.2(e)		Introduce a risk prioritisation system to undertake educational assessments	<b>Q4</b>
	2.2(f)	<b>2.2(b)</b>	Complete the re-registration process for Early Years Services	<b>Q2</b>
	2.2(g)		Complete the initial School Age Childcare registrations	<b>Q3</b>
2.3. Provide information, guidance, and support to regulated services to enable them to meet their requirements	2.3(d)	<b>2.3(a)</b>	Develop and introduce regulatory digital learning solutions	<b>Q3</b>
	2.3(e)	<b>2.3(b)</b>	Publish two Industry Guidance Notes for Early Years Inspectorate and Alternative Care Inspection and Monitoring Service	<b>Q3</b>

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
3.3. Develop a sustainable workforce where our employees are recruited, retained, and supported to have the required knowledge skills and competencies to deliver high quality and integrated services	3.3(c)	<b>3.3(a)</b>	Scope the requirements of a Tusla Capability Framework	<b>Q4</b>
	3.3(d)		Implement a Practice Development & Improvement Framework to train, recruit and retain a skilled, competent, and quality social work and social care staff equipped to practice effectively	<b>Q4</b>
	3.3(e)		Provision of a Governance Framework through the establishment of an Integrated Workforce Development Group, that will inform and prioritise the workforce planning priorities for the Agency	<b>Q1</b>
	3.3(f)	<b>3.3(b)</b>	Development of HR strategies linked with the Agency's strategic goals and objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and driven by the requirements identified from the Integrated Workforce Development Group	<b>Q4</b>
	3.3(g)		Development of National and Regional Employee Retention Strategies focused on the retention of our employees across all grade groups and service areas in the agency	<b>Q4</b>
	3.3(h)		To promote Tusla as an employer of choice	<b>Q4</b>
	3.3(h)			<b>Q4</b>
3.4. Encourage, promote, and support shared learning across the Agency and continuous professional development for our staff	3.4(a)	<b>3.4(a)</b>	Explore the development of appropriate frameworks/strategies to create a supportive environment for shared learning and continuous professional development	<b>Q3</b>
	3.4(b)		Conduct a gap analysis to evaluate what systems are in place for knowledge management and learning opportunities	<b>Q4</b>
3.5. Enhance Tusla local, regional, and national performance system using meaningful measures that promote improves outcomes for the people we serve	3.5(c)	<b>3.5(a)</b>	Continue development (in conjunction with Operations) of an operational service performance and improvement system	<b>Q4</b>
	3.5(d)		Progress the Development of a Tusla Outcomes Framework to measure the outcomes for children and families who access Tusla services	<b>Q4</b>
	3.5(e)		Increase use of complaints data to inform the Agency of areas for learning	<b>Q4</b>
	3.5(f)	<b>3.5(b)</b>	Work with Tusla services to ensure NIMS is used as an electronic incident management file from reporting through review to closure	<b>Q4</b>
	3.5(g)		Work with Tusla services to encourage the use of electronic risk register system for reporting and management of organisational risks	<b>Q4</b>
	3.5(h)		Promote awareness of protected disclosure processes within the Agency	<b>Q4</b>

Objective	Ref#	Linked to BP Ref (where applicable)	Related Action	Due
4.1. Service Areas and integrate national services into the revised regional governance structures	4.1(c)	<b>4.1(a)</b>	Formal sanction for eleven posts (5 Executive and 6 Regional)	<b>Q1</b>
	4.1(d)		Negotiation of change with representative bodies and commence recruitment	<b>Q2</b>
	4.1(e)		National Executive Management Team and Six Regional Services Area established	<b>Q4</b>
4.2. Strengthen interagency forums at local and national level (including HSE & An Garda Síochána)	4.2(c)	<b>4.2(a)</b>	Tusla and AGS to mutually approve and implement a joint programme of work	<b>Q2</b>
	4.2(d)		Strengthen interagency collaboration with HSE in response to children and young people with complex needs.	<b>Q3</b>
	4.2(e)		Strengthen Children & Young People Services Committees to improve interagency collaboration and alignment with TUSLA priorities	<b>Q4</b>
	4.2(f)	<b>4.2(b)</b>	Strengthen TUSLA Commissioning Plans to ensure services are commissioned in line with the needs of children, young people, and families in the local community and with TUSLA Service priorities	<b>Q3</b>
	4.2(g)		Implement Tusla's actions in the revised Tusla Parenting Strategy 2021 and support the development and implementation of the DCEDIY led model of parenting support services.	<b>Q4</b>
4.3. Implement the ICT and Data Management Strategies	4.3(c)	<b>4.3(a)</b>	Progress Tusla to be a digital-first Agency where all services are supported by end to end, secure, efficient, and easy to use case management systems	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(d)		Progress the ICT self-sufficiency and segregation programme from HSE systems and infrastructure	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(e)		Continue to enhance the ICT service capacity and operating model	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(f)		Establish and manage formal governance arrangements for ICT services in Tusla	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(g)		Enhance governance structures for the overall management of data in Tusla	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(h)	<b>4.3(b)</b>	Enhance the systems, structures and guidance required to establish a well-functioning records management environment in Tusla	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(i)		Enhance data warehouse and business intelligence systems	<b>Q4</b>
	4.3(h)		To design, implement and support a technical database infrastructure to manage the storage of Tusla's datasets and ensure their security and availability	<b>Q4</b>
4.4. Ensure the effective management of our agency's financial resources	4.4(c)	<b>SA</b>	Carry out a monitoring and review regime for Section 56 Agencies commensurate with levels of funding provision and the range of operational and practice risks involved in such work.	<b>Q4</b>

# Appendix 2- Glossary of Terms

<b>Barnahaus Model</b>	A child-friendly, interdisciplinary, and multi-agency centre for child victims and witnesses where children could be interviewed and medically examined for forensic purposes, comprehensively assessed, and receive all relevant therapeutic services from appropriate professionals.
<b>Capability Framework</b>	A set of detailed and behaviourally-specific descriptions of the key behaviours, and underlying knowledge, attributes, and experiences that are required for successful performance in a job, team, or organisation.
<b>Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)</b>	Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) is a revision of the 2014 Policy “Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse and Neglect”. It is based on learning that indicated the need to further enhance the consistency of practice across the Agency. In addition, changes were also required to incorporate new legal judgements in this complex area of law and practice.
<b>Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA)</b>	The principal regulator of recruitment and selection in the Irish public service.
<b>Executive Management Team</b>	The Executive Management Team consists of the organisations high-level managers who work together to manage the agency’s operations, oversee the implementation of the agency’s goals and objectives, and monitor the effectiveness of service delivery.
<b>IRPP (Irish Refugee Protection Programme)</b>	A programme established by Government in 2015 as a key part of Ireland’s response to the global humanitarian migration crisis which committed Ireland to accept 4,000 persons under various mechanisms, including the EU Relocation and UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency)-led Resettlement Programme and the acceptance of unaccompanied minors previously resident in the unofficial camp in Calais.
<b>Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)</b>	A guardian that a court appoints to watch after a child/young person during a case.
<b>Interagency fora</b>	Multiple agency forum involvement
<b>Integrated Financial Management System</b>	Integrated financial management information systems (IFMIS) are systems to support the management of public sector budgetary, financial, and accounting operations and promote better public financial management (PFM) with a centralized registry of public sector revenues and expenditures.
<b>Integrated Service Network</b>	The management and delivery of services so that clients receive a continuum of preventive and curative services, according to their needs over time and across different levels of the system
<b>Job Families</b>	Job families are groupings of jobs related by common vocations/professions
<b>Joint Protocol</b>	Where two or more agencies work together to develop a protocol
<b>Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</b>	An agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document.
<b>Performance indicators and metrics</b>	Performance Indicators, also known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measures that help the agency define and measure progress towards our goals. Metrics are numbers which tell the agency important information about how well our processes are working and where we might need to make improvements.

<b>Performance Statement</b>	The Performance Statement is the letter issued from the Minister every year, which sets out the direction the Minister wishes the agency to pursue in respect of their Business Plan for the following year
<b>Permanency Planning</b>	Permanency planning is our approach to ensure children have a secure, stable, and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond. In a child centred care planning approach there are four pathways to permanence for children that include reunification to both family, guardianship, long-term foster care and adoption.
<b>Practice Audit Framework</b>	A framework to outline the practice audits objectives, its scope, and its timeline.
<b>Public Sector Duty Framework</b>	The Framework places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work.
<b>Public Service Recruitment and Appointments Act, 2004</b>	The regulatory framework for fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment and selection in the Irish public service.
<b>Retention Framework</b>	Strategies employed by an organisation to retain its employees and reduce turnover.
<b>Response Pathways</b>	The outcomes established following the assessment of a child.
<b>Service Delivery Framework</b>	A set of principles, standards, policies and constraints to be used to guide the designs, development, deployment, operation and retirement of services delivered by a service provider to offer a consistent service experience to a specific user community in a specific business context
<b>Site-specific safety statements</b>	A Site-Specific Safety Statement is specific to the site or service setting out the arrangements in place to safeguard the safety, health and welfare of staff, service users and visitors, along with the co-operation required from staff to achieve this.
<b>State Claims Agency</b>	A State body which provides asset and liability management services to Government and is designated as the State Claims Agency when performing the claims management, risk management and legal cost management functions delegated to it under the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000 and the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2014.
<b>Third-Party Data Sharing Arrangements</b>	Written agreement to share data formally outside your organisation to achieve GDPR compliance.
<b>Value Leaders</b>	An Agency-wide peer-nominated group of leaders of all grades who support the embedding of the agency's values and behaviours.
<b>Workforce Plans</b>	The plan to ensure that an organisation has current and future access to the human capital it needs to perform effectively and is aligned to the organisation's overall business objectives and the long-term vision.





