

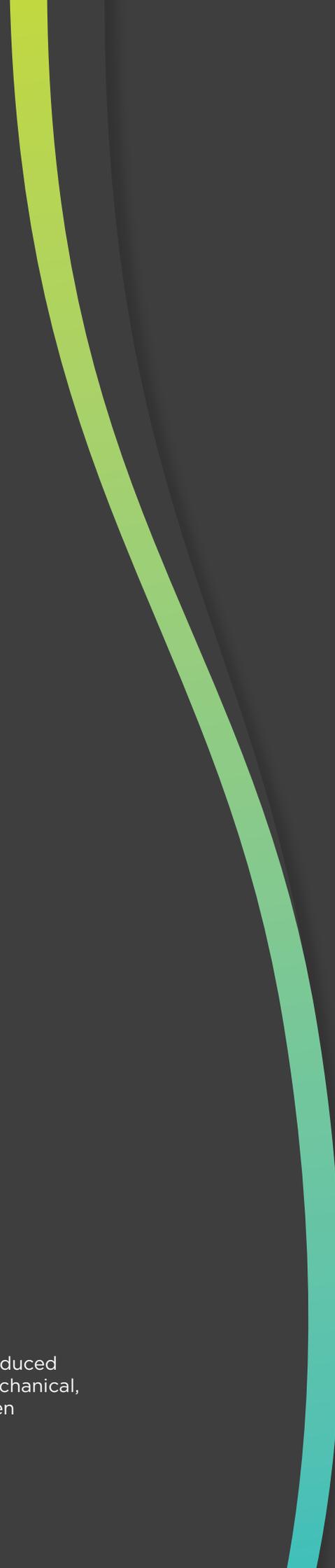
# TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

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## Business Plan 2016





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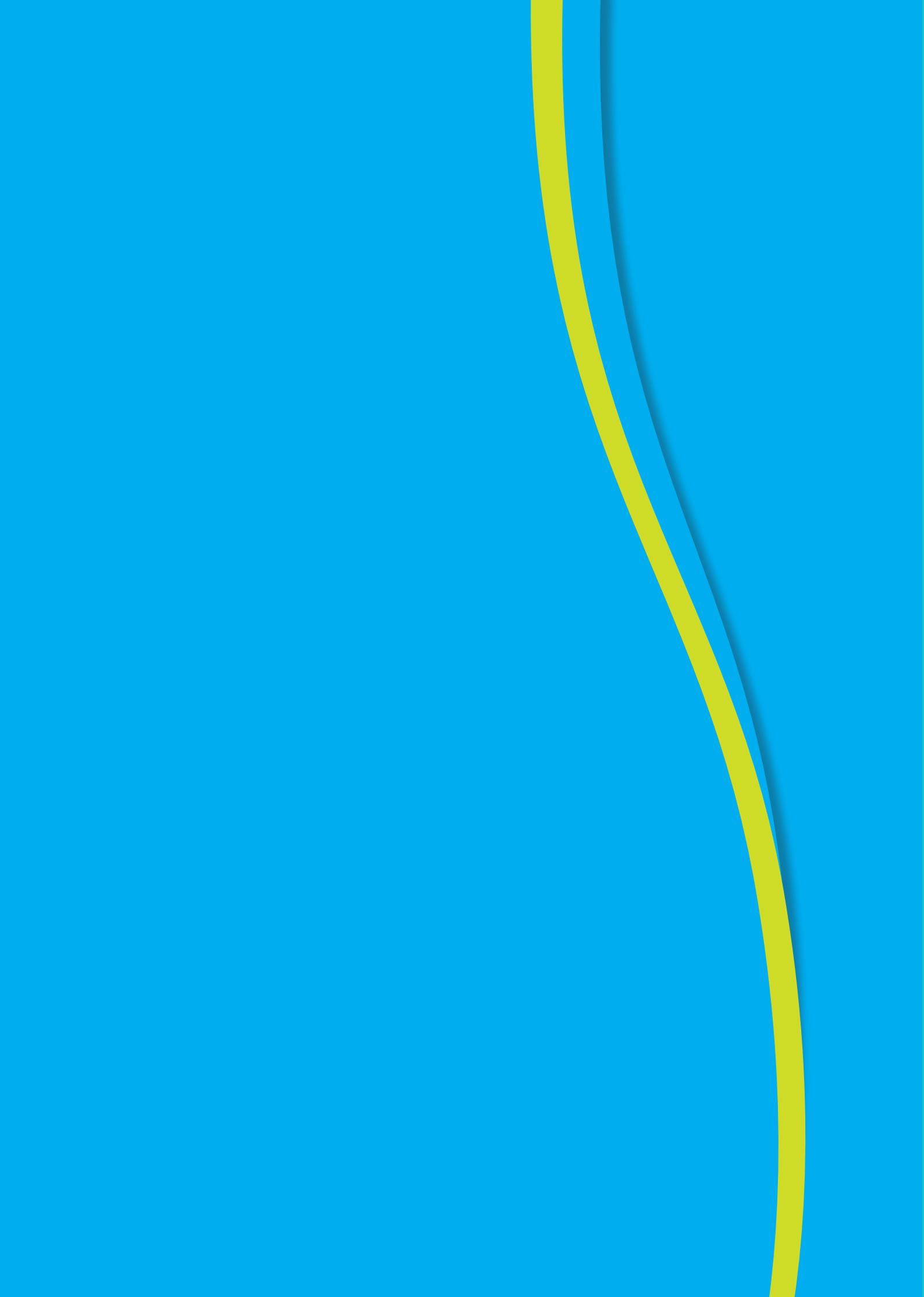
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# Key Priorities

**Output A: Tusla’s child protection processes and systems are responding to children at risk in a timely manner.**

<b>Child Protection and Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure an approach to responding to referrals which consistently provides an efficient, effective and proportionate response.</li> <li>• Targeted national reduction of cases awaiting allocation by 60%.</li> </ul>
<b>Foster Care Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of approved statutory foster carers.</li> <li>• Improve the percentage of general foster carers with an allocated link worker and other support arrangements.</li> <li>• Ensure 100% of children in care have an allocated social worker.</li> </ul>
<b>Residential Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce dependency on residential care by developing intensive community based supports.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with the new regulations for special care and meet registration requirements.</li> <li>• Conduct a review of the suitability of current residential services for older children with challenging behaviour and improve service capacity to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish Children in Care to Adoption Handbook.</li> <li>• Establish a secure, accessible and centralised interim archive for adoption records.</li> <li>• Reduce the waiting list for information and tracing services.</li> </ul>

**Output B: All processes and systems underpinning children and family policy and services are evidence informed.**

<b>Policy and Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish governance framework to ensure consistent development of policies, procedures, protocols and guidance documents.</li> <li>• Implement Children First in line with legislative commencement dates.</li> <li>• Develop an Alternative Care Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Quality Assurance Framework and complete self-assessment cycle in all Tusla services.</li> <li>• Conduct a review of child protection welfare and children in care services to assess their impact and outcomes delivered for children.</li> <li>• Implement Tell Us – Tusla’s complaints and feedback system.</li> <li>• Embed risk and incident management practices and systems.</li> <li>• Enhance integrated performance reporting and oversight systems.</li> </ul>

### Output C: A targeted range of family and parenting supports

<b>Family Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementing Meitheal within the Agency and with partner organisations.</li> <li>• Develop a National Strategy on Participation for Children and Young People.</li> <li>• Integrate Family Resource Centres and counselling programmes into Tusla’s Service Delivery Framework.</li> <li>• Ensure the readiness of Family Resource Centres to assist with refugee resettlement programme.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the capacity of the ACTS Team to meet the needs of children in care who present with challenging behaviour.</li> <li>• Provide services for children who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Domestic, Sexual &amp; Gender Based Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a full National DSGBV Service Team.</li> <li>• Implement a standard monitoring and reporting framework for DSGBV.</li> <li>• Contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning of Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the commissioning approach with all externally funded organisations.</li> <li>• Enhance governance arrangements with externally funded organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>Early Years Services Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new inspection processes and systems based on the new regulations.</li> <li>• Establish a Central Registration Office.</li> </ul>

### Output D: Attendance, participation and retention in full-time education is embedded in service delivery for all children

<b>Educational Welfare Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement an integrated approach to service management.</li> <li>• Establish a Caseload Management System.</li> <li>• Engage with the Department of Education and Skills’ DEIS review regarding the future roles of SCP and HSCL.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a plan based on the recommendations of the ESRI review of the SCP.</li> <li>• Continue to align EWS with Tusla’s Service Delivery Framework.</li> <li>• Establish systems to monitor the educational participation of all children in care.</li> <li>• Produce a policy to support vulnerable children’s participation in education.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-recognised Schools &amp; Home Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer of Section 14 to Quality Assurance Directorate and reform the associated processes and systems.</li> </ul>

**Output E: A fit for purpose organisation to deliver on the Agency’s strategic intent**

<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit additional staff to address service risks and organisational capacity gaps.</li> <li>Enhance supervision and performance management for all staff.</li> <li>Reduce time lines for the recruitment of staff to vacancies from six months to four months.</li> <li>Develop a strategic workforce plan.</li> <li>Implement the Continuous Professional Development Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement effective financial management to ensure the Agency remains within its allocation for 2016.</li> <li>Develop a Resource Allocation Model.</li> </ul>
<b>ICT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an ICT strategy for Tusla and improve ICT infrastructure.</li> <li>Ensure equitable access to HSE ICT infrastructure to facilitate networking, hosting and support for Tusla applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Estates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the capital plan to address key priorities for 2016.</li> <li>Implement the Estates Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Design and Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the new organisation design under the Project Management Office.</li> <li>Conduct an evaluation of staffing requirements in respect of the new organisation design at all levels.</li> <li>Arrange for reorganisation of staffing in line with the evaluation, organisation design and infrastructural requirements.</li> <li>Establish a localised infrastructure to support service delivery e.g. HR, finance, business support.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an Agency-wide gap analysis regarding compliance with health and safety legislation.</li> <li>Develop a programme of work to address risks identified by the gap analysis.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource in-house legal services in order to reduce legal spend.</li> <li>Establish an in-house system to review and analyse performance information regarding legal services.</li> <li>Establish an in-house system for the oversight of member firms.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve internal communications.</li> <li>Improve public awareness of Tusla’s functions and purpose.</li> </ul>



# Foreword

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The Child and Family Agency was established at a time of crisis and uncertainty. During the first two years, important initial steps were taken to restore confidence, increase capacity and improve practice. Progress has proven to be challenging against a background of financial restrictions but reforms have been introduced, services have improved and Tusla is proving responsive to the needs of children by building on the strengths of families and communities.

While much credit for successes achieved is due to the commitment, hard work and professionalism of Tusla staff and partners, a sustainable future must now be established. During 2015 a business case, entitled *From Survival to Sustainability*, was developed to outline the resources required to put the Agency on a sustainable footing over a three year period.

In response to the case set out, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs allocated funding of €676.042m for Tusla in 2016 - an increase of over 5% on provision for 2015. This is a welcome step and puts the Agency on a path to sustainability. The improving economy and enhanced financial settlement for Tusla will enable key legacy issues to be addressed; therefore, ensuring Tusla remains an outward looking, inclusive and responsive service provider and advocate for children and families.

The headline initiatives in this Business Plan include:

- The introduction of an objective resource allocation model to inform distribution of new resources.
- Plans to address the unsatisfactory backlog of unallocated cases.
- The introduction of a multidisciplinary approach by Tusla responding to the psychological welfare needs of children and families.
- A strengthening of the organisational infrastructure to ensure maximum support for service delivery and strong governance.
- The introduction of a commissioning approach to all externally funded organisations.
- The promotion of participation in education.
- The research of more systemic early intervention approaches to support specific vulnerable groups.
- Progressing of Quality Assurance initiatives including the Child Protection Notification System.
- The application of Section 3 investigations in a timely and fair way.

Tusla is committed to its vision of ensuring that all children are safe and reaching their full potential. Thus, a key initiative in 2016 is to promote a whole child approach to the delivery of children's services. This cannot be achieved by Tusla alone. While conscious of the Child and Family Agency's unique role in the delivery of children's services, this Business Plan places an emphasis on collaborative and coordinated working with the NGO sector, other State agencies and Government Departments.

The 2016 Business Plan represents an important step towards achieving the mission set out in the Corporate Plan of designing and delivering child-centred, supportive, coordinated and evidence-informed services that strive to ensure positive outcomes for children.

This is an exciting agenda and one which I am delighted to promote.



**Gordon Jeyes**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Tusla – Child and Family Agency**

# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

Tusla is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. Drawing on the strengths of the three strands from which it has developed, the Child and Family Agency continues to deliver a range of services from early intervention and prevention to crisis services.

## Business Plan 2016 and Performance Statement

Each year a Business Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 46 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013. The 2016 Business Plan is the second of a three year cycle and is underpinned by the Corporate Plan 2015 – 17, the Agency's performance information (Chapter 2) and also takes into account the direction provided in the Performance Statement issued by the Minister. Additionally, the 2016 Business Plan incorporates actions not complete or ongoing from the 2015 Business Plan.

## Achievements

Achievements to date include:

- Service Delivery Framework Model implemented.
- Improved service delivery e.g. 26% reduction in cases awaiting allocation in 2015.
- Strengthened accountability with clear line management responsibility.
- Internal quality assurance and integrated performance reports to inform service improvement initiatives.
- Open and transparent communications about responsibilities and activities.
- Allocation of a budget based on needs analysis.
- Publication of the Corporate Plan 2015 - 17 and annual Business Plan in 2014 and 2015.
- Evidence-Based Approach – National Policy Catalogue, Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiatives (EPPI), Early Intervention programme (PPFS).

## Priorities 2016

- This document sets out an ambitious work plan for 2016 which seeks to provide evidence based, responsive services which always have the child at the centre.
- A broad range of supports delivered for families will ensure that service responses are timely, evidence-based and proportionate.
- Particular actions will address the reduction of cases awaiting allocation.
- Meitheal will provide a framework for effective interagency working, while CPNS will provide critical information regarding children at risk.
- A National Policy Oversight Group will ensure that policies and procedures pertaining to Tusla will be coordinated and communicated effectively to staff so that all those working for and with children and families are aware of the context in which services are delivered.
- The Early Years Inspectorate will be further developed as will the services to support victims of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV), and therapeutic services.
- An integrated approach to Educational Welfare Services (EWS) will ensure continued support of educational participation for all children.
- A resource allocation model will be developed to ensure equitable distribution of available resources and investment.
- The recruitment and retention of staff will be reformed.
- Ongoing efforts to establish an effective ICT system will be continued.
- Legal services will promote more cost effective methods of ensuring that children's rights are protected.
- A key programme of major and minor capital works will be undertaken.

**Key Risks**

Risks to achieving the priorities set out above include:

- Potential impact of increased demand for services as a result of *Children First* legislation.
- Capacity and capability to recruit identified staffing requirements in 2016.
- Lack of capital allocation for investment in ICT infrastructure.
- ICT capacity and capability to deliver on actions.
- Continued co-dependence on the HSE for essential services.
- No budget allocation to support award payments under the State Claims Agency.

Actions to mitigate against these risks are identified in Section 1.

**Metrics and Demographics**

Section 2 sets out key metrics which have informed the Business Plan 2016 including:

- 5% increase in total referrals to social work services since 2012 from 40,187 to 43,630.
- A decrease of 4% in child abuse/neglect referrals and a 12% increase in child welfare referrals for the same period.
- Reduction in the number of cases awaiting allocation by 2,460 from quarter one of 2014 until quarter three 2015.

Data is also set out in respect of aftercare, Early Years Inspectorate, Family Support and EWS.

**Financial Framework**

While challenges still remain, the Agency welcomes the decision to provide funding of €676.042m for Tusla in 2016 - an increase of over 5% on provision for 2015 and Section 3 sets out the financial framework in respect of this resource. Additional funding of €2.0 million will be provided by Atlantic Philanthropies.

The make-up of the financial allocation is as follows:

Category	Source	Allocation (€m)
Pay		245.494
Foster Care and Other Allowance		120.766
Private and Residential and Foster Care		92.589
Legal (inc GAL costs)		29.000
Grant Arrangements Under Section 56		141.754
Other non-pay		34.879
Gross Allocation	DCYA - 662.482 Atlantic Philanthropies - 2.000	664.482
Appropriation in Aid		(19.069)
Net Allocation		645.413
Capital Allocation		13.560

Table A: 2016 Financial Allocation for 2016

Proposed additional funding of €1.1 million for Early Years has not been included in the funding table above.

The allocation of funding in 2016 will allow Tusla to recruit additional staff and procure additional

resources. It will also enable the Agency to address a number of risks and address other areas requiring improvement 2016:

- Significantly reduce the number of cases awaiting allocation to a social worker.
- Develop an ICT strategy to support frontline work and data management and continue the development of NCCIS.
- Strengthen management and governance arrangements at all levels within the organisation.
- Improve residential care facilities, in particular special care facilities.
- Develop and implement an alternative care strategy.

### **Workforce Development and Planning**

Section 4 sets out the Workforce Development and Planning arrangements for Tusla, the main aspects of which are:

- A whole time equivalent complement for 2016 of 4,167 and associated pay budget of €245.494m
- A monthly pay profile expenditure of €192.909m up to the end of quarter three of 2015
- The establishment of a Project Management Office to design a project plan to implement the new organisation design.
- The key actions required to enhance the capacity of the HR directorate to recruit the additional staff against the budget uplift.
- The main elements of the recruitment and retention strategy for 2016 including Tusla Recruit, reduction in recruitment timelines, supply and demand analysis, staff resource and skill mix, retention and attendance management and workforce development.

### **Child Protection and Welfare Reform**

In 2016 there will be a number of initiatives that will drive the reform of child protection and welfare services. This reform will be encapsulated in the development of the Agency's Child Protection and Welfare Strategy. Section 5 outlines two of the key initiatives regarding this reform which will form the basis for the strategic intent as follows:

- Reducing cases awaiting allocation to social workers;
- Preparation and developments for Children First.

### **Subsidiarity**

In 2015 extensive consultation was undertaken with Tusla staff regarding the operational model and organisational structure required to put the Agency on a sustainable footing. The consultation centred on exploring the most effective systems and structures of service delivery within Tusla. This organisation review, in conjunction with the report of the Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency (2012), recommends that the Agency move from a three to a two tier organisational design with subsidiarity at the core of the model. The two tier model comprises a national office with corporate supports and service delivery units. The move to the subsidiarity model is set out in Section 6.

### **Multi-Agency Working**

Key to the success of Tusla's work to date is its willingness and capacity to work in a collaborative way with all stakeholders. The work of the Agency is undertaken in very close co-operation with partner organisations in the NGO sector, other State agencies and Government Departments across services including mental health, disability services, An Garda Síochána, youth justice, education and those working with vulnerable groups. The work planned in these areas is described in Section 7.

In particular the Agency works closely with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) which is responsible for *'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020'* which sets out the Government's agenda and priorities in

relation to children and young people over the next seven years. Tusla will contribute to the delivery of the national framework and to the legislative programme which relates to aftercare, adoption and *Children First*, including arrangements for mandatory reporting and a register of non-compliance for organisations which do not meet their safeguarding obligations.

### Delivering Corporate Plan Year Two

The 2016 Business Plan identifies a number of priority areas and actions organised under the five Short Term Outputs in the Corporate Plan which are set out in detail in Chapter 8 and summarised below:

#### **Output A: Tusla's child protection processes and systems are responding to children at risk in a timely manner.**

- In preparation for commencement of the *Children First* legislation a National Implementation Team will focus on the development of key requirements including mandated reporting systems and responses, information and guidance on mandated assisting, training and e-learning, and information and advice on the development of safeguarding statements. This will include the establishment of a register of non-compliance.
- Confirm consistent support for all young persons leaving care to participate in education and training and to provide advice and advocacy for all care leavers. This will include revising the National Aftercare Policy and preparing for new legislation that will ensure that all eligible young people have a statutory right to an aftercare plan.
- Implementation of the legislative amendments proposed under the Adoption Information and Tracing Bill 2015.
- A detailed plan will address the resource deficits in certain Areas to significantly reduce the open cases awaiting allocation to a social worker.
- The Children in Care multi-disciplinary teams will be expanded to provide four regional teams with enhanced capacity to support children in care with challenging behavior.

#### **Output B: All processes and systems underpinning children and family policy and services are evidence informed.**

- A quality review of the outcomes for children in Child Protection and Welfare and Children in Care Services will be undertaken, as well as themed quality reviews and audits.
- Implementation of the Tusla's Incident Management Policy and full roll-out of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Implementation of Tusla's feedback and complaints policy and procedure, Tell Us, and the NIMS complaints module. Innovative methodologies for service users to provide feedback will be developed and a national service user survey will be conducted. This work will be complemented by the roll-out of Tusla specific Protected Disclosure and Good Faith policies.
- The Risk Management Policy for Tusla will be rolled out with training in 2016 and a national review of the Risk Register will be conducted.
- Standardisation of policy development through the establishment of a National Policy Oversight Group. The Child Protection and Welfare Handbook will be updated.
- Implementation of Tusla's Quality Assurance Framework, including a full self-assessment cycle for all services.
- The Alternative Care Strategy will be developed. A Children in Care to Adoption Handbook will be developed.

**Output C: A targeted range of family and parenting supports.**

- Further development of Family Support Services via the recruitment of additional posts in Prevention, Partnership and Family Support and the provision of additional training in Meitheal.
- A Commissioning Support Unit and an annual commissioning cycle will be developed.
- The Early Years Inspectorate will develop and implement new processes and systems regarding the new regulations. A central registration office will be established and an ICT system developed to support intelligence driven inspections.
- The priorities for DSGBV services include: the implementation of governance and oversight systems; implementation of the Istanbul Convention; a reporting framework for funded DSGBV services; the development of ICT systems to support the delivery of services; and a national practice guide and training pack.
- Discussions regarding services relating to psychological welfare of children and families with the DCYA and HSE will be concluded.

**Output D: Attendance, participation and retention in full-time education is embedded in service delivery for all children.**

- The outcomes from the review of the School Completion Programme will be implemented and an integrated approach to service management adopted.
- Work will continue on the alignment of Educational Welfare Services with the Tusla Service Delivery Framework.
- Complete the review of Section 14 assessment guidance for children educated in non-recognised schools.
- The education achievements and participation of all children in care will be measured. A policy to support vulnerable children's education attainment will be developed.

**Output E: A fit for purpose organisation to deliver on our strategic intent.**

- Strengthen management and governance arrangements at all levels within the organisation. The corporate infrastructure will be strengthened to ensure Tusla is an effective, efficient and responsive organisation.
- Develop an ICT strategy to support frontline work and data management and continue development of NCCIS.
- Develop an effective and efficient recruitment service to support the recruitment of new posts in 2016.
- Further develop the Tusla legal service to promote more cost effective working in the interests of children.
- Tusla's Estates Strategy will continue to be implemented and the programme of major and minor capital works will be undertaken.
- A Value for Money Strategy will be developed.
- A Resource Allocation Model will be developed.
- Enhanced governance arrangements with grant recipients will be introduced.
- A strategy will be developed to embed Tusla's values and behaviors as set out in the Corporate Plan.

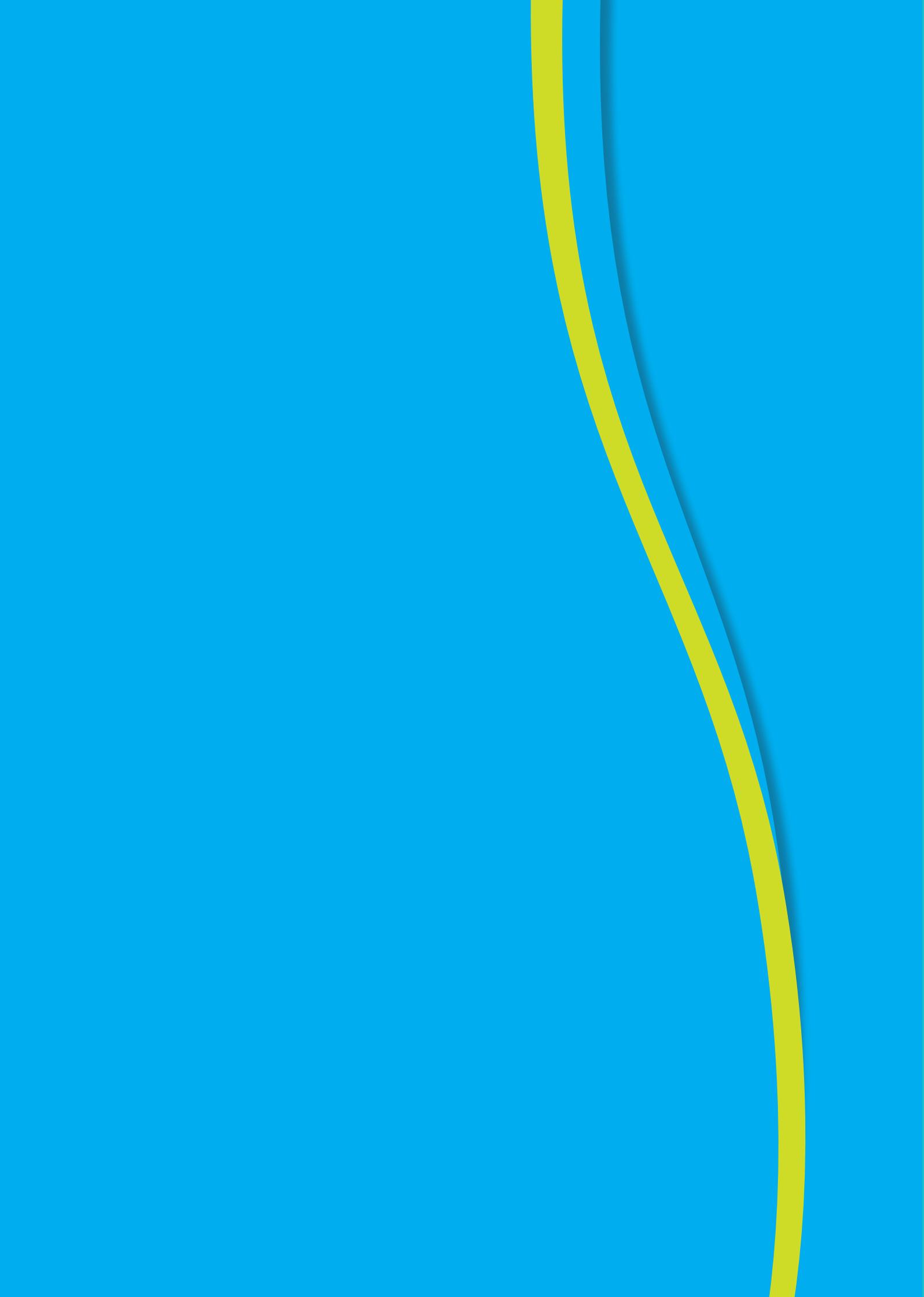
**Performance and Governance**

The 2016 arrangements for performance and governance are described in Section 9 and include:

- Performance Oversight and the establishment of a National Performance Assurance Group.
- Strengthening governance through the new organisational model.
- The introduction of the Agency's Quality Assurance Framework to further promote and enhance self-evaluation.

- Introduction of self-assessment in order that services can measure themselves against the three quality principles which characterise high quality services i.e. person-centred, well-led and safe.

The delivery of service priorities and actions outlined in the 2016 Business Plan will be tracked, reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis. The template that will be used for tracking and monitoring the 2016 Business Plan is provided in Appendix 1. A report based on progress against the Business Plan will be submitted to the Board and the DCYA on a quarterly basis.



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

On 1 January 2014, Tusla became an independent legal entity, merging:

- The Health Service Executive Children and Family Services;
- The Family Support Agency;
- The National Educational Welfare Board.

Additionally, some psychological services and a range of services pertaining to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV) were also integrated under the new Agency's remit. The integration of three distinct organisations into a cohesive agency has been challenging but much progress has been made in developing a single entity providing services to children and families.

At a time of austerity through the commitment and dedication of staff, Tusla has delivered a significant range of overarching improvements to strengthen governance and service delivery:

- Service Delivery Framework Model implemented;
- Improved service delivery e.g. 26% reduction in cases awaiting allocation in 2015;
- Accountability has been strengthened with clear line management responsibility;
- Internal quality assurance and integrated performance reports now inform service improvement initiatives;
- Open and transparent communications about responsibilities and activities;
- Allocation of a budget based on needs analysis;
- Publication of the Corporate Plan 2015-17 and annual Business Plan in 2014 and 2015;
- Evidence-based Approach – National Policy Catalogue, Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiatives (EPPI), Early Intervention programme (PPFS).

## 1.2 Vision, Mission, Values, Behaviours

In order to achieve its long-term outcomes Tusla has developed an overarching vision as part of its Corporate Plan 2015-17:

***“All children are safe and achieving their full potential”***

This is an ambitious vision that Tusla is fully committed to delivering and it underpins this business plan and the day to day work of the Agency.

The Agency's mission statement outlines Tusla's core purpose and reason for being:

***“With the child at the centre, our mission is to design and deliver supportive, coordinated and evidence-informed services that strive to ensure positive outcomes for children, families and communities”***

Tusla has also committed to a set of values and associated behaviours to guide the Agency's approach to delivering services to children and families. These values and behaviours underpin the culture of the Agency and should be clearly seen in decision making and internal and external engagement.

They are as follows:

- **Courage and Trust**
  - Reliable, committed and accountable
  - Professional, ethical and responsible
  - Willing to stand up for our values
- **Respect and Compassion**
  - Putting the individual at the heart of our services
  - Protecting the most vulnerable
  - Respectful and considerate towards all
- **Empathy and Inclusion**
  - Fair, responsive and transparent
  - Promoting collaboration and connected thinking
  - Taking a long-term, whole-system view

In 2016 it is planned to roll out projects to further promote and embed these values and behaviours.

### 1.3 The 2016 Business Plan

Each year a Tusla Business Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 46 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013. The 2015 Business Plan was the first business plan of a three year cycle based on the Agency's Corporate Plan 2015-17.

This section provides the context by which the 2016 Business Plan is formulated and structured. It is underpinned by the Corporate Plan 2015-17, the Agency's performance information (see section 1.4) and also takes into account the direction provided in the Performance Statement issued by the Minister to the Agency. Additionally, the 2016 Business Plan incorporates actions not completed or ongoing from the 2015 Business Plan. The remainder of this section provides further detail on how the structure of the 2016 Business Plan relates to the Agency's Corporate Plan 2015-17.

#### Corporate Plan 2015-2017

In accordance with Section 41 for the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 Tusla has prepared a Corporate Plan. This three year plan was underpinned by policy guidance and a performance framework provided by the Minister covering the period 2015-2017 and based on an identification of need to improve outcomes for children. The plan articulates five Short-term Outputs which identifies the key focus areas for the Agency in its first three years. They also provide the foundation to enable additional Long-term Outputs identified in the Corporate Plan to be achieved.

The five Short-term Outputs are:

**Output A:** Tusla's child protection processes and systems are responding to children at risk in a timely manner.

**Output B:** All processes and systems underpinning children and family policy and services are evidence informed.

**Output C:** A targeted range of family and parenting supports.

**Output D:** Attendance, participation and retention in full-time education is embedded in service delivery for all children.

**Output E:** A fit for purpose organisation to deliver on our strategic intent.

To enable the achievement of the Short-term Outputs, eight strategic objectives were identified as follows:

1. Improve the quality and focus of the delivery of services for children and families.
2. Develop the governance structures, processes and supporting infrastructure to ensure that Tusla is in a position to carry out its functions in an effective and efficient manner.
3. Establish new and distinct values based culture, which empowers children and families through high quality services.
4. Develop an organisation that lives within its means and utilises its resources in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
5. Develop a workforce which is valued and supported within a learning organisation.
6. Position the Agency as a responsive, trustworthy and respected body with its own unique identity.
7. Build on our research strategy to develop policy and enable evidence-based decision-making and high quality service delivery.
8. Ensure a strategic approach to quality assurance, information management and risk management that supports continuous improvement and good governance.

These eight strategic objectives intersect with each of the five Short-term Outputs. The strategic map outlined in Figure 7 (page 20) illustrates how both elements contribute to the realisation of the Corporate Plan 2015-17 and related business plans.

### **1.4 Better Outcomes, Brighter Future**

Tusla is fully committed to the implementation of Better Outcomes Brighter Future (BOBF). There were a number of achievements in 2015 regarding progressing actions under the BOBF framework, including: the establishment of Children and Young Persons Committees in each Area; progressing the Commissioning Strategy; the expansion of EPIC nationally; the roll out of Meitheal; improved multi-agency working and the establishment of services for young people who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour.

Tusla will continue to achieve on the actions set out in the BOBF framework through the implementation of the Corporate Plan actions and will report to the DCYA on these achievements quarterly as required.

### **1.5 Challenges and Risks**

There are a number of challenges and risks to the implementation of the 2016 Business Plan which are detailed in Table 1.1 (page 20-21) with associated mitigating actions. Financial risks are described in detail in Chapter 3.

Strategic Objectives (Abbreviated)	Short-term Output A Responding to Children at Risk	Short-term Output B Evidence informed services	Short-term Output C Targeted range of family support	Short-term Output D Education embedded in service delivery	Short-term Output E A fit-for-purpose organisation
Improve the quality and focus of the delivery of services for children and families.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop the governance structures, processes and supporting infrastructure.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establish a new and distinct values-based culture that empowers children and families.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop an organisation that lives within its means and utilises its resources efficiently.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop a workforce that is valued and supported within a learning organisation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Position the Agency as a responsive, trustworthy and respected body.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build on our research strategy to develop policy and enable evidence-based decision making.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure a strategic approach to quality assurance, information and risk management.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 7 Strategic Map

Key Risks	Mitigating Actions
Potential impact of increased demand for services as a result of Children First legislation on service delivery commitments in the 2016 Business Plan, in particular cases awaiting allocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a Children First Action Plan.</li> <li>• Development of a business case for additional resources to address additional demand.</li> <li>• Regular analysis of metrics in relation to service demand to monitor and respond to service pressures.</li> </ul>

Key Risks	Mitigating Actions
Capacity and capability to recruit identified staffing requirements in the 2016 Business Plan to meet service demands and meet identified expenditure targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tusla Recruit in place.</li> <li>• Workforce plan developed.</li> <li>• Regular analysis of HR metrics to monitor and respond to service pressures.</li> </ul>
ICT capacity and capability to deliver on actions identified within the 2016 Business Plan due to the lack of ICT capital funding. In particular, the development of NCCIS, increased requirement for ICT support due to recruitment and delivery of new metrics required in the business plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with the HSE regarding strengthening the Service Level Agreement for ICT support.</li> <li>• Recruitment of additional ICT staffing.</li> <li>• Procurement of strategic ICT support.</li> </ul>
Continued co-dependence on the HSE for essential services such as procurement, ICT, consumer affairs, HR, Finance and Estates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with the HSE regarding strengthening the Service Level Agreement for specific services required.</li> <li>• Development of internal capacity for essential services.</li> </ul>

Table 1.1 Business Plan 2016 Risks

## 2.0 Key Metrics and Demographics

Analysis of the Agency's key metrics and demographics has been used to inform the development of the 2016 Business Plan. This section provides a summary of some of the key metrics that impact on the priority areas in 2016.

### Referrals to Social Work Services

Social work services received 43,630 referrals in 2014, some 5% more than 2013 and 9% more than 2012 (Table 2.1). This equates to 380 referrals per 10,000 population 0-17 years, up from 350/10,000 population in 2013. A total 21,892 referrals have been received for the first six months of this year and based on a doubling of this figure over the next six months, it is projected that referrals for 2015 will be as high, if not higher than 2014.

Referrals	2012	2013	2014	△ from 2013	%△ from 2013
Total Referrals	40,187	41,599	<b>43,630</b>	+2,031	+5%
Rate/10,000 pop 0-17 yrs*	350	362	<b>380</b>	+18	+5%

Table 2.1: Referrals and rate per 10,000 population 0-17 years, 2012-2014

\*Population 0-17 years: CSO Census 2011

In 2014, the rate of referrals per 10,000 population 0-17 years ranged between 229/10,000 in Dublin South East/Wicklow to 552/10,000 in Waterford/Wexford. Cork reported the highest number of referrals at 4,983 while Mayo reported the fewest at 960 (Table 2.2).

Area	Number of Referrals 2014	Rate/10,000 Pop 0-17 years
Waterford/Wexford	3,954	552
Dublin North	3,310	523
Midlands	3,825	492
Carlow/Kilkenny/St. Tipperary	2,774	480
Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan	1,104	479
Cavan/Monaghan	1,565	446
Mid-West	4,032	424
Louth/Meath	3,508	401
Galway/Roscommon	3,063	396
Cork	4,982	388
Dublin North City	2,184	301
Mayo	960	295
Kerry	1,019	292
Dublin South West/Kildare/West Wicklow	2,857	278
Donegal	1,144	257
Dublin South Central	1,469	235
Dublin South East/Wicklow	1,880	229
<b>National</b>	<b>43,630</b>	<b>380</b>

Table 2.2 Number of referrals and rate per 10,000 population 0-17 years, by area 2014

Child welfare concerns tend to account for a higher proportion of referrals. In 2014, 57% of referrals flagged a child welfare concern compared to 43% for child abuse or neglect (Table 2.3). Figures for 2014 also show a 12% increase in child welfare referrals from 2013. There were fewer referrals for child abuse/neglect in 2014 than either of the previous two years.

<b>Referrals</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Δ +/- 2013</b>	<b>%Δ 2013</b>
Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals	19,044 (47%)	19,407 (47%)	18,676 (43%)	-731	-4%
Child Welfare Referrals	21,142 (53%)	22,192 (53%)	24,954 (57%)	2,762	12%
<b>Total Referrals</b>	<b>40,187</b>	<b>41,599</b>	<b>43,630</b>	<b>2,031</b>	<b>5%</b>

Table 2.3: Referrals by type, 2012-2014

The projected impact of mandatory reporting is difficult to predict, although based on referral patterns to date and international experience, there will be a significant increase which is estimated to be between 50-75%. The majority of this impact will be experienced by intake or initial referrals services. This will result in significant numbers of referrals that will require robust screening and initial assessment to determine the level of intervention required to ensure children are safe from harm. Beyond assessment there will be increased demand on child protection and welfare teams for child protection and family support plans. The commencement of mandatory reporting is yet to be finalised and therefore its impact in 2016 has yet to be determined.

### Cases Open to Social Work Services

There is an average of 27,000 cases open to social work services at any one time, with at least 70% (n = 19,500) of these cases allocated to a social worker (Table 2.4). While there continues to be a significant number of open cases awaiting allocation of a social worker, recent figures indicate a slow but steady downward trend. Systems for monitoring cases awaiting allocation and ensuring the prioritisation of children most at risk have also been strengthened across the areas. Further improvement is expected over the coming year with approval for recruitment of additional resources as outlined in the 2016 Business Plan.

	<b>Q1 2014</b>	<b>Q2 2014</b>	<b>Q3 2014</b>	<b>Q4 2014</b>	<b>Q1 2015</b>	<b>Q2 2015</b>	<b>Q3 2015</b>
<b>Open Cases</b>	29,463	29,314	27,723	27,967	27,293	27,575	26,129
<b>No (%) Allocated</b>	19,990 (67.9%)	19,766 (67.4%)	19,442 (70.1%)	19,425 (69.5%)	19,926 (73%)	20,444 (74.1%)	19,116 (73.2%)
<b>No (%) Awaiting Allocation</b>	9,473 (32.1%)	9,548 (32.6%)	8,281 (29.9%)	8,542 (30.5%)	7,367 (27%)	7,131 (25.9%)	7,013 (26.8%)

Table 2.4: Cases open to social work, Q1 2014 - Q3 2015

### Children in Care

Tusla has an average of 6,400 children in its care, with over 90% in a foster care arrangement (Figure 2.1). Over 90% of children in care at any one time have an allocated social worker and a written care plan, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Latest data (Sept 2015) shows 98% of children in care aged six to 15 years (inclusive) and 94% of children in care aged 16 and 17 years are in full-time education.

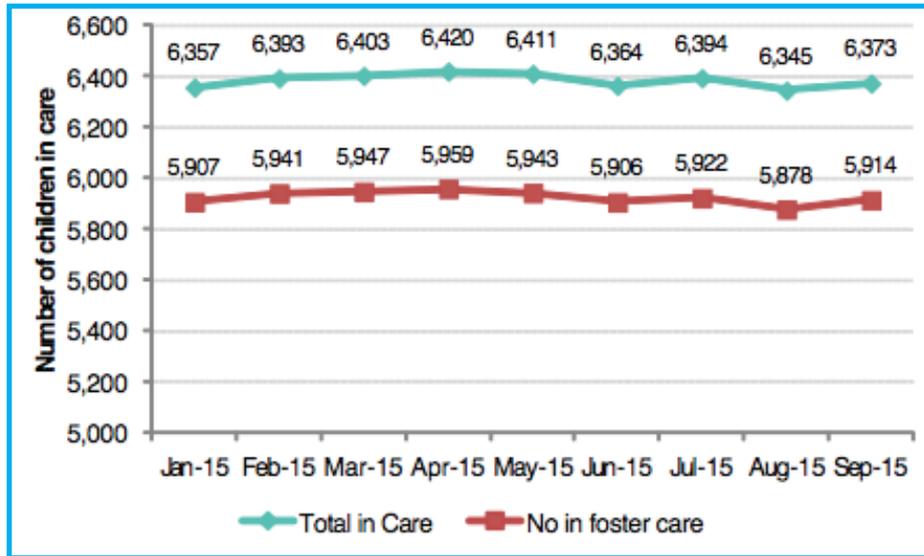


Figure 2.1 Children in care, January - September 2015

Over the past year, there has been an increase in the use of private foster care and residential placements (Figure 2.3). This increased demand is attributed to difficulties in some areas in placing children with relatives, a general shortage of suitable placements in some areas, ongoing difficulty in recruiting new foster carers to keep up with demand and increased demand for specialist services. The latest count (Sept 2015) reports 4,746 foster carers across the country of which over 91% are approved and on the panel of approved foster carers. This figure includes general, relative and private carers. This increase in private services has resulted in an increase in expenditure and has been taken into account in the 2016 Business Plan.

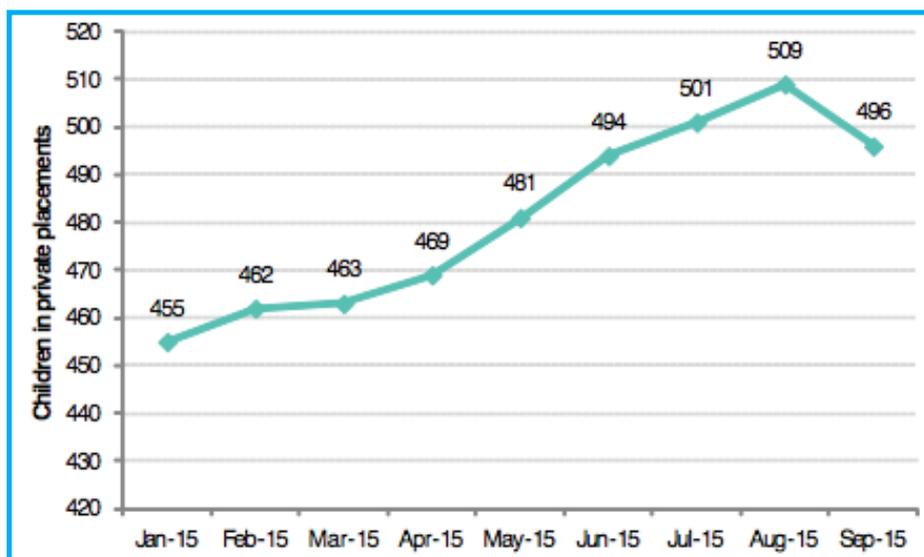


Figure 2.2 Children in private placements, January - September 2015

### Aftercare

Latest data shows that 1,796 young adults, who were in care, are in receipt of aftercare services. More than half (58%) of young adults (18-22 years) in receipt of aftercare services are in full-time education. Some 392 young adults were discharged from care by virtue of reaching 18 years during the first nine months of 2015 and of the 374 eligible for a service 85% (n=318) had an allocated aftercare worker. Commencement of the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015, will place a statutory duty on the Agency to prepare an aftercare plan for each eligible child. This provides the opportunity to establish the demand for and costs of a full after care service.

### Early Years Services Regulation

There have been 116 new registrations/notifications of Early Years Services (EYS) over the nine months of the year bringing the total number of EYS to 4,523. With expansion of the free pre-school programme announced by the Minister, it is expected that the number of EYS will increase in 2016. Primary legislation requires all services deemed registered on 1 January 2014, to be re-registered by 1 January 2017. This requirement will present a significant challenge to the Inspectorate and is dependent on staff recruitment.

### Family Support Services

At least 10,330 children and 7,489 families were referred to family support services during the first six months of the year. This brings to 15,516 the number of children and 11,572 the number of families that were in receipt of family support services at the end of June 2015. It is expected that these numbers will increase next year and into the future with implementation of the Meitheal model and increased partnership working with community-based services as part of the commissioning process.

### Educational Welfare Service

The Educational Welfare Service (EWS) worked with 2,951 children across the country over the nine months from January to September 2015. A total of 407 School Attendance Notices (SANs) - the first step in legal proceedings - and 116 summonses were issued over the same period (Table 5). The SANs were in respect of 265 individual children and the summonses were in respect of 76 individual children.

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15	Total
<b>SANs</b>	76	37	51	45	42	11	0	45	100	407
<b>Summonses</b>	14	11	13	23	15	10	18	1	11	116

Table 2.5: School attendance notices (SAN) and summonses issued, Jan - Sep 2015

The School Completion Programme (SCP) supported 33,000 children and young people through 139 projects nationally. The Home School Community Liaison scheme (HSCL) provided one-to-one support to 25,856 parents to encourage and enable their children to stay in and achieve in education, while more than 46,000 parents availed of the other initiatives, training and activities provided by HSCL.

## 3.0 Financial Framework

### 3.1 Overall Funding for 2016

#### Net Non-Capital Determination

The Agency's gross non-capital determination for 2016 is €664.482 million. This will be funded, in part by an estimated €19.069 million in income from superannuation, pension related deductions and other sources. Therefore, the Agency's net non-capital determination for 2016 is €645.413 million (includes €2 million allocation from Atlantic Philanthropies). The net non-capital determination is the maximum approved expenditure limit. Expenditure must be strictly managed within this limit.

The make-up of the financial allocation in respect of Gross Non Capital is outlined in table 3.1:

Category	Source	Allocation (€m)
Pay		245.494
Foster Care and Other Allowance		120.766
Private and Residential and Foster Care		92.589
Legal (inc GAL costs)		29.000
Grant Arrangements Under Section 56		141.754
Other non-pay		34.879
Gross Allocation	DCYA - 662.482 Atlantic Philanthropies - 2.000	664.482
Appropriation in Aid		(19.069)
Net Allocation		645.413

Table 3.1: Financial Allocation in respect of Revenue for 2016

The Gross Non Capital allocation in 2015 was €631.1 million so the 2016 Gross Non-capital allocation provides an increase of €33.3 million. This is outlined in Table 3.2.

Proposed additional funding of €1.1 million for Early Years has not been included in the funding table above.

Allocation Summary - Business Plan 2016	
Description	Value €M
Gross Allocation in 2015	631.1
Additional Funding re Existing Level of Service Pressures	21.0
Additional Funding re Prioritised Initiatives for 2016	12.3
<b>2016 Total Gross Allocations</b>	<b>664.4</b>

Table 3.2: Gross Non Capital Allocation Summary for 2016

#### Capital Provision

Provision has also been made for capital expenditure by the Agency during 2016 up to a maximum of €13.560 million.

#### Financial Governance

The Agency will operate in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible and strictly within

the budget allocated. This management of the Agency's allocation for 2016 will have a particular regard for the pay/non-pay split.

In the event that income is less than estimated then, in line with Public Financial Procedures, gross expenditure will be reduced to compensate. Any excess income, should it arise, accrues to the Exchequer and cannot be used to increase gross expenditure.

The Agency will be funded up to the approved level of allocation or expenditure, whichever is the lesser. In the event that the Agency incurs any excess in net expenditure in 2016, it will be addressed on a 'first charge' basis in 2017 whereby the Agency will have to discharge the resultant liabilities arising as a first charge on its income and expenditure account, in the following financial year.

The Agency will have due regard to all relevant public sector financial rules including the Public Spending Code and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) Circulars. The Agency is currently working with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) to assess the implication of Circular 13/2014, which proposed a movement to fund agencies on vouched expenditure basis, and to identify how this implementation can be managed without adverse impact to the affected agencies' delivery of services. The current position is that the majority of agencies continue to be funded on the basis of funding in advance of expenditure, due to cash flow risks that a move to a vouched expenditure basis would involve.

The payroll and non-pay expenditure of the Agency continues to be processed through a shared service arrangement with the HSE which will continue through 2016.

### 3.2 Financial Profiling and Reporting

Tusla will report on expenditure against budget and cash flow throughout the year. Tusla is required to submit to the DCYA, as soon as possible, the 2016 budget profile broken down by month, in line with the approved level of net expenditure.

In 2016, particular attention will be paid to the separation of the pay and non-pay profiles. Detailed workings will be done to accurately estimate the expenditure/draw-downs occurring under both categories, having regard to timing and commitments.

In 2016, Tusla will continue to provide monthly and weekly reports to the DCYA 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.

### 3.3 Current Cost Pressures in 2015

The expected outturn for Tusla for 2015 is set out in Table 3.3 on page 26.

The expected overspend in 2015 of €14 million will be met from the Supplementary Allocation provided by the DCYA.

#### Pay Costs

Tusla has estimated agency staff costs of €16.3 million in 2015 which is €2.804 million above the budget allocation. These costs are driven by two main service demands: vacancies caused by maternity leave and cover for vacancies in social work and residential services. These costs have exceeded budget principally due to agency staff being used to cover for permanent posts awaiting recruitment.

Type of Expenditure	Summary Category	2015 Full Year Forecast			
		Annual Forecast €'000s	Annual Budget €'000s	Forecast Variance €'000s	Forecast Variance %
<b>Pay</b>	Agency	16,316	13,512	2,804	21%
	On Payroll	213,260	218,497	(5,237)	(2%)
	Pension Pay	4,732	4,530	202	4%
<b>Pay-Total</b>		<b>234,308</b>	<b>236,539</b>	<b>(2,231)</b>	<b>(1%)</b>
<b>Non-Pay</b>	Foster Care & Other Allowances	118,821	119,374	(553)	(0%)
	Grants to Outside Agencies	142,156	139,463	2,693	2%
	Legal	30,353	29,270	1,083	4%
	Other Non-Pay	24,817	20,686	4,130	20%
	Private Residential and Foster Care	88,196	78,090	10,106	13%
	Staff Travel	8,452	7,103	1,350	19%
<b>Non-Pay Total</b>		<b>412,795</b>	<b>393,987</b>	<b>18,808</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Income Total</b>		<b>(3,632)</b>	<b>(2,880)</b>	<b>(752)</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Superann/PRD Income Total</b>		<b>(20,316)</b>	<b>(21,988)</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>(8%)</b>
<b>Week 53 Pay</b>		0	3,500	(3,500)	(100%)
<b>Net Expenditure</b>		<b>623,155</b>	<b>609,157</b>	<b>13,998</b>	<b>2%</b>

Table 3.3 Expected Outturn for 2015.

### Pension Pay

Due to additional retirees in 2015, the pension pay is forecast to exceed the budget allocation by €0.202 million. No allocation for pension pay was transferred from HSE on establishment of Tusla.

### Grants

Cost savings that were not implemented in 2015 are expected to result in grant payments exceeding budget by €2.693 million.

### Legal

Guardian ad Litem (GAL) related legal costs are the principal element behind the expected 2015 cost pressure of €1.083 million in legal costs. The spend in 2015, although exceeding the budget allocation, is a significant improvement €36 million in 2014 and reflects significant work by the Agency to achieve value for money in legal services.

### Other Non-Pay

The vast majority of the excess of spend over budget of €4.130 million in other non-pay relates to cost savings on grants of €3.8 million not implemented in 2015 and applied against budget for other non-pay.

### Private Provision

The impact of increased complex needs of children in care has also created an increase in demand for specialist residential care placements for children. Residential placements cost upwards of €250,000 per place per annum. Growth in Private Residential and Private Foster Care placements in 2015 has resulted in a forecast cost pressure for 2015 of €10.106 million.

### Staff Travel

Staff travel costs in 2015 are at a similar level to 2014 but due to budget constraints in 2015 are expected to exceed budget by €1.350 million. A zero based budgeting approach suggests that additional budget will need to be allocated to this as part of existing level of service (ELS) in 2016. There are increased controls and reviews in this area of expenditure.

### 3.4 Expected Cost Pressures in 2016

This section outlines the expected cost pressures in 2016. Table 3.4 outlines the additional monies allocated to Areas, Regions and Directorates to meet ELS pressures in 2016.

Additional Monies allocated to Areas, Regions and Directorates to Meet ELS Pressures			
No:	Description	WTE	Value €M 2016
1	Foster Care and Other Allowances	N/A	1.4
2	Grants	N/A	6.5
3	Private Provision	N/A	11.5
4	Staff Travel	N/A	1.4
5	Other Non-Pay	N/A	2.1
6	Local Org Structure	24.0	1.3
7	Alternative Care Strategy	TBC	3.0
8	Legal	N/A	(0.3)
<b>Total Increase in Non-Pay ELS</b>			<b>27.0</b>
9	Pay - Reduction Mainly Due to Week 52	N/A	(6.0)
<b>Total Additional ELS Resource for 2016</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>21.0</b>

Table 3.4 Additional monies allocated to Areas, Regions and Directorates to meet existing level of service (ELS) pressures in 2016.

### Pay Costs

Agency costs are expected to reduce over the life of the Corporate Plan but in 2016 as new posts are recruited, the demand for agency staff may increase in the short-term to meet the exigencies of the service.

### Pension Pay

Increase pension pay due to additional retiree numbers in 2016 is forecast to require an extra €0.470 million. There was no budget transferred to the Agency for this expenditure item from the HSE.

### Foster Care and Other Allowances

The impact of an increasing number of children in care is two-fold:

- There is an increase in the number of foster care allowances paid.
- As more children in care turn 18, there is an increase in the number of aftercare allowances that are paid and supports given.

These increases are forecast to require extra funding of €1.4 million in 2016.

### Grants

Additional approved grant payments for 2016 will cost €6.5 million over and above the budget allocation from 2015.

### Other Non-Pay

Other non-pay allocation in 2016 has increased in respect of the following: €3.8 million budget reinstated regarding cuts applied in 2015 that could not be applied to Grants; €2 million in respect of Atlantic Philanthropies; €1 million Programme Management Office set up.

### Private Provision

Projected growth of 22 private residential placements (10 in Quarter 4 2015 and three per quarter in 2016) will add to the existing cost pressure and total €11.5 million over the 2015 budget allocation. The Agency plans to allocate significant funding of €3 million to an Alternative Care Strategy with a view to reducing the number of children requiring care in a residential or private foster care placement setting.

### Staff Travel

Staff travel costs were underfunded by €1.35 million in 2015 and this will increase in line with additional staff resources being planned for 2016. Additional funding will be allocated. Enhanced oversight, control and reporting on this expenditure will continue to be developed in 2016.

### Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV)

The budget for DSGBV has increased by €0.4 million to take account of an increase in the existing level of service and obligations arising under the Istanbul Convention. This takes the overall funding to €20.6 million for 2016.

## 3.5 Prioritised Initiatives for 2016

The prioritised initiatives to be allocated funding in 2016 are outlined in Table 3.5:

Prioritised Initiatives - Business Plan 2016				
No:	Description	WTE	Value €M 2016	Expected Full Year Cost €M
1	Proportionate Intervention Teams - Initial Investigation	6.0	0.3	0.4
2	Cases Awaiting Allocation	6.0	6.1	7.8
3	Organisation Structure	52.5	2.8	3.9
4	Sleep Over Rosters	120.0	1.9	7.7
5	DSGBV	TBC	0.2	2.2
6	Early Years Inspection	TBC	1.1	1.1
<b>2016 New Allocations</b>		<b>379.5</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>23.0</b>

Table 3.5 prioritised initiatives to be allocated funding in 2016

### **Prioritised Initiatives in 2016**

Additional pay funding in respect of open cases awaiting allocation, organisation structure, sleepover rosters, proportionate intervention team and DSGBV funding totaling €11.2 million has been allocated to Tusla to cover the cost of implementing these new initiatives.

It should be noted that the allocation received from DCYA in respect of these initiatives only covers the expected cost of implementation in 2016 based on the original recruitment plan. As these are only part year costs, the annual costs will rise to €21.9 million resulting in a shortfall of €10.7 million to be addressed in 2017 and beyond.

### **Resource Allocation Model**

Tusla has undertaken work in 2015 on the development of an appropriate needs-based Resource Allocation Model (RAM) for service delivery. This work was adapted from the existing model developed with HSE for use in primary and community care settings and considered its application for Tusla services.

Based on the work to date, the funding for the 2016 prioritised initiatives will be directed to service areas with less than mean funding, according to the RAM, as well as areas of identified risk. The work on the RAM will continue through 2016.

### **3.6 Capital Expenditure**

The 2016 capital allocation is designed, in the first instance, to meet existing contractual commitments entered into under the existing capital plan. These include:

- Development of new and improved special care facilities at Portrane and Ballydowd (Lucan).
- Refurbishment of frontline service facilities at a number of locations around the country to enhance service capacity and improve access.
- A vehicle fleet replacement programme to ensure safe transportation of children in state care.

### **Capital Plan Priorities**

A three year capital plan 2015-17 has been developed and approved by the Board. It is important to note that there is currently no rolling commitment to a three year capital funding.

A retrofit and new build at the special care facility in Portrane is in progress. The special care centre at Ballydowd is being refurbished to include fire and regulatory compliance requirements. These developments result in an increase in the overall special care capacity from 17 to 30 places.

A review of estates will cover statutory compliance, condition monitoring, planned maintenance, reactive works, data collection, risk management, asset management, divestment and insurance.

Development of the minor capital plan will be based on the creation and maintenance of a reliable database to determine the condition of Tusla assets, analysis of expenditure on reactive maintenance and service user needs. This plan will specifically address risk and compliance issues identified during review of estates.

These key capital developments are summarised in the Table 3.6 (page 32).

Service/Location	Brief Description	2016 Forecasted Spend €m
Portrane	New build and remodelling of three existing blocks.	10.600
Lucan Road	Fire upgrade and general upgrade.	0.916
North City	Refurbishment works and temporary accommodation.	0.250
Limerick City	Refurbishment works.	0.200
Portlaoise	Refurbishment works.	0.300
Athy Road	Refurbishment works.	0.250
Special Care Services	Operation and reactive maintenance requirements.	0.100
National Estates	Dilapidations provision for termination of existing and future leased properties.	0.100
National Residential	Tusla service requirements for efficient and reliable vehicles. 10 vehicles to be acquired.	0.100
National	New signage requirements.	0.050
National	Works include statutory compliance, a programme of reactive and preventive maintenance and equipment, replacement and fitting out of leased properties. NB: €350k carried over from 2015.	0.360
National	National Child Care Information System.	0.300
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13.525</b>

Table 3.6 capital developments in 2016

The commitments identified under Estates will consume the allocation for Capital in 2016. As a consequence no resources are available to invest in ICT related projects.

### 3.7 Financial Risk Areas

Effective service delivery and the pace of reform are dependent on resources available. This has been taken into account in the setting out of the priorities for 2016.

The key financial risk areas for the Agency in 2016 are:

- The funding to recruit 380 WTEs in 2016 is part year funding only. The cost of these posts in a full year is estimated at €23 million. The risk is that commitments are entered into in 2016 that will have an additional funding implication of €10.7 million for 2017 and onwards.
- An increase in the number of children in care requiring specialist residential and foster care services will have a significant impact on resources due to the high cost nature of these services.
- Legal Costs driven by GAL costs and third party legal costs which are paid through the Agency. Costs for these items are not controllable by the Agency as they are determined by activity in individual courts.
- Pension costs may be driven by higher numbers of staff retirements than are budgeted for in 2016. These costs cannot readily be controlled in terms of financial performance and are very difficult to 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.
- Payments to the State Claims Agency (SCA) for the cost of managing and settling claims that arose in previous years will be made by Tulsa in 2016. 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.

- 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.
- Legislation is due to be enacted for Children First, Aftercare and Early Years. The financial implication of this legislation is not yet clear and with the exception of Early Years no additional funding has been made available. Additional expenditure driven by this new legislation could impact on the Agencies ability to live within its 2016 allocation.
- The capital budget does not contain sufficient funding to meet existing commitments under the estates plan and investments required for ICT in 2016.
- Public Liability Insurance for foster carers is no longer available from private insurers. Discussions are being progressed with the SCA to provide mitigating cover. Any claims not covered by SCA will fall to be paid by Tusla.

## 4.0 Workforce Development and Planning

Workforce development and planning were a priority for the Agency in 2015. A number of improvements were made to the delivery of HR services which resulted in better planning, performance reporting and new structures to support recruitment.

The 2016 budget allocation and associated posts will require significant enhancements to HR services, in particular recruitment and retention. To address this challenge, a number of actions are planned for 2016 to ensure business objectives and targets are met. This section outlines some of the key considerations and actions that will be undertaken in 2016.

### Staffing Levels and Pay

Tusla is one of the largest state organisations in the country and staffing levels have remained relatively static since establishment primarily as a result of budgetary and staffing controls on overall public service numbers.

The increased staffing resource in 2016 will enable the Agency to achieve the following:

- Recruitment of additional frontline professional staff to support enhancements to service delivery and caseload management.
- Additional social workers recruited to the foster care service.
- Improvements in the quality and delivery of services.
- Enhanced governance and strengthened organisational infrastructure.
- Enhanced supervision and performance management.

### 2015 Staffing Resource

Table 4.1 sets out the whole time equivalent (WTE) staffing resource for Tusla in post on 31 October 2015. This does not include agency or vacancies.

### Whole Time Equivalent Complement 2015

There were 343 posts in the recruitment process on 31 October 2015, bringing the total staffing resource complement of Tusla to 3,767.

Staffing by Category	Oct-15
Social Work	1359.47
Social Care	1137.09
Psychology and Counselling	22.39
Other Support Staff inc catering	62.43
Other Health Professionals	9.05
Nursing	51.73
Management VIII+	91.65
Family Support	171.65
Educational Welfare Officers	66.39
Admin Grade III-VII	451.91
<b>Total Staffing</b>	<b>3424</b>

Table 4.1 Tusla WTE Staffing Resource

**Profile of Tusla Workforce by Age**

The following table sets out the workforce of Tusla by age category. It is important to note that the total of 4,088 is the total headcount in respect of the 3,424 WTE set out in Table 4.2.

Age Band	No of persons
20-24	23
25-29	173
30-34	593
35-39	819
40-44	658
45-49	560
50-54	542
55-59	454
60-64	242
65+	24
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,088</b>

Table 4.2 Profile of Tusla Workforce

**Monthly Pay Profile**

The following table sets out a monthly profile of pay costs for all grades in respect of the 2015 staffing resource for quarter three, including the year to date spend on the 31st October 2015.

	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	YTD
Basic	15,410,965.14	14,935,903.29	15,571,672.51	152,877,126.68
Overtime	3,210.66	11,066.33	9,970.00	48,971.59
On-call	58,444.24	34,197.17	44,170.35	535,112.24
Allowances	181,442.70	207,098.33	165,896.76	2,139,090.02
Sat/Sun/PH	590,596.07	344,990.21	482,381.53	3,983,132.93
Night Duty	98,663.55	105,873.54	122,546.75	1,108,053.48
Er PRSI	1,457,105.57	1,367,491.77	1,461,898.98	14,270,315.72
Arrears	- 246,820.35	119,332.30	-29,973.95	417,411.12
Agency	1,397,655.49	1,668,940.57	1,717,861.66	13,589,249.24
Superann - Lump Sums	291,592.24	0.00	303,350.87	2,381,581.02
Superann - Pensions	32,383.06	109,266.76	171,480.77	1,559,517.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,275,238.37</b>	<b>18,904,160.27</b>	<b>20,021,256.23</b>	<b>192,909,562.02</b>

Table 4.3 Tusla monthly pay profile

### **Whole Time Equivalent Complement 2016**

Additional resources have been provided within the Tusla budget allocation to address challenges and critical staff shortages identified in the business case, *Survival to Sustainability*. Recruitment activity is intended to lead to an additional 400 staff across all grades, bringing the total staff complement for 2016 to 4,167.

### **Pay Budget 2016**

The pay budget associated with this complement for 2016 will be €245.494m.

### **Organisational Design**

During 2015, extensive consultation was conducted with staff and partners regarding the organisational design of Tusla. In 2016 a streamlined structure will be adopted with support and accountability focused on the most local, practical level of service delivery. The move towards subsidiarity has been endorsed through the consultation and will be strengthened regarding increased delegation, resource deployment, consistent standards and strong governance. In order to effectively implement the new organisational design, a project plan will be developed under the Project Management Office in line with *Survival to Sustainability* and key steps will include:

- Support the establishment of three clusters;
- Conduct an evaluation staffing requirements of new organisational design at all levels in the Agency;
- Establish a localised infrastructure, including HR, finance and business support;
- The reorganisation of staffing structure in line with the evaluation, organisational design and infrastructural requirements.

### **Workforce Planning Capacity**

The budget uplift and resulting increase in Tusla's staffing resource will present a challenge to the Agency in terms of additional recruitment activity. An additional 400 new posts will be recruited as well as 250 posts arising from natural attrition, bringing projected recruitment activity for 2016 to 650. A recruitment project plan will be finalised in January 2016 to include a detailed schedule of recruitment for the year. It is intended to build workforce planning capacity by augmenting Tusla Recruit with additional dedicated staff as follows:

- Dedicated HR staff per cluster to interface between Tusla Recruit and the Regional and Area Managers to drive the recruitment campaigns across all staff grades
- Dedicated Tusla Recruit personnel at corporate level as business partners to work strategically with HSE National Recruitment Services.
- Additional administrative Tusla Recruit staff to form a campaign team to recruit 650 identified posts on a targeted basis
- Dedicated Tusla Recruit staff to undertake Garda vetting for the whole organisation, including staffing and foster carers.

Targets will be developed in respect of this work as part of the work planning in January and variance reporting against the targets will be undertaken on a monthly basis. An age profile analysis will be conducted in 2016 which will inform the recruitment strategy.

### **Recruitment Strategy**

The key issues impacting on Tusla's capacity to recruit since establishment have been multi-faceted and include:

- A moratorium on recruitment across the public sector with the exception of exempted grades.
- Budgetary restrictions requiring Tusla to operate within its financial allocation.

- Limited capacity of the HR Directorate to respond to recruitment demands across the Agency.
- Cross-agency working with the HSE National Recruitment Service.

The additional budget and whole time equivalent (WTE) uplift enables Tusla to implement a recruitment strategy which will incorporate a range of targets and initiatives to build on 2015 achievements. Furthermore, the overall effectiveness of the HR Directorate will be enhanced to ensure the Agency delivers on the commitments outlined in this business plan as set out below.

### **Tusla Recruit**

The following will be undertaken to strengthen Tusla Recruit – Tusla’s dedicated recruitment and talent management service:

- Adequately resource the Tusla Recruit service to address Agency requirements.
- Enhance partnership with the National Recruitment Service.
- Augment the work of Tusla Recruit and undertake bespoke campaigns and drive other interventions to address staff shortages, retention strategies and absenteeism management.
- Phased introduction of 19 Tusla Recruit staff and monitoring of performance against supply and demand to ensure a fit-for-purpose model of recruitment for the 650 posts required in 2016.
- Undertake a dedicated recruitment campaign with relevant third level institutions regarding the recruitment of professionals required for the delivery of services.

### **Reduce Recruitment Timelines**

Current timelines for recruitment will be reduced from six months to four months with following actions:

- All administrative posts will be recruited directly by Tusla Recruit which has already evidenced reduced timelines in respect of the filling of vacancies. These posts are key to supporting and enhancing all frontline services.
- Engage with An Garda Síochána to reduce vetting time.
- Allow for some processes to be undertaken post-recruitment for example medical assessments.
- Review the recruitment model with all stakeholders to identify challenges and risks associated with the recruitment of all staff grades by quarter 1.
- Implement all recommendations from the recruitment model review to reduce timelines for recruitment within a 16 week period by quarter three.

### **Supply and Demand Analysis**

The HR Directorate will continuously aim to have a target WTE complement of 4,167 at all times by recruiting to fill future predicted vacancies based on accurate trends as follows:

- Establish demand data analysis and consult with Service Directors and Service Managers by quarter one.
- Establish actual supply trends through engagement with third level institutions by quarter one.
- Set recruitment activity levels against established trends between quarter two and quarter four. The current trend indicates a requirement of approximately 250 posts in active recruitment at all times in order to address new posts identified and fill vacancies arising within existing posts.
- Revise recruitment trends in line with monthly profiling and variance reporting.

In acknowledging a supply deficit specific to the role of social worker with only 250 graduates annually, Tusla Recruit will ensure that the maximum number of social worker posts are successfully filled through the following initiatives:

- Identify realistic supply through engagement with the third level institutions.
- Conduct Tusla staffing analysis with Service Directors to identify demand.
- Engage in pre-graduation pro-active engagement with the student cohort and organise one event in each relevant third level institution by quarter three.
- Engage in early attraction process with on-site engagement with the student body in each relevant third level institution.
- Upscale and formalise current work place programmes for both social worker and social care staff.
- Establish strong brand recognition for Tusla with the third level institutions.
- Identify and engage with Student Placement Officers in each third level institute to act as advocates for Tusla.

### **Staff Resource Allocation Model and Skill Mix**

In order to prepare for a potential deficit in social work recruitment a focus will be taken to ensure the right people are in the right place at the right time and key steps to achieving this will include:

- The HR Directorate will work collaboratively with all directorates to review and establish baseline staffing levels across all service areas.
- Ensure the correct skill mix exists within teams using the clerical review and gap analysis of clerical support within each of the teams and regions.
- Undertake a team task load definition exercise and associated time in motion study to ensure the tasks assigned to team members are appropriate to their roles.
- Select a pilot area and run pilot resource model based on the time in motion study.

### **Retention and Attendance Management**

As of 31 October 2015 there were 212 exits from Tusla across all grades, 64 of whom were retirees and the following sets out this information:

- Overall attrition across the Agency is 6.22% of which 1.87% relates to retirees and 4.35% relates to other attrition.
- The attrition rate specific to Social Work is 8.83% (gross) of which 1.77% relates to retirees and 7.06% is other attrition.

The HR Directorate intends to pro-actively address exits from the Agency which can otherwise be prevented through a strong retention strategy. This will reduce the number of vacancies arising and future-proof services from the loss of experienced staff across all grades, with a particular focus on social work, through best practice in Human Resource activities. The following are some of the potential interventions which will be considered and implemented as appropriate to support the retention strategy:

- Ensure staff have an appropriate caseload in accordance with caseload management system.
- Implement internal staff-transfer system within Tusla.
- Implement Continuous Professional Development.
- Ensure all staff have appropriate ICT equipment and infrastructure to support the work they undertake.
- Undertake a business support gap analysis to inform the organisation design to ensure teams are fully supported in the work they undertake.
- Undertake specific learning and development events to influence the development of a positive culture within Tusla.
- Ensure adequate senior social work practitioner staff to support and mentor new graduates.
- Undertake an organisation culture survey and use findings to inform improvements.
- Develop and implement succession management strategies.

These will be prioritised against insights gleaned from an analysis of exit interviews which will be conducted consistently from quarter one by the Human Resources Directorate.

### **Workforce Learning and Development**

Workforce Learning and Development (WLD) has responsibility for all learning and development activities within Tusla. A full programme of learning and development activities, identified through training needs analysis of staff and organisational priorities, is provided annually.

In addition, Workforce Learning and Development is progressing a range of initiatives such as a bespoke leadership and management development programme; implementation of a National Strategy for Continuous Professional Development; and the development a framework for engagement with third level colleges.

## 5.0 Child Protection and Welfare Reform

In 2016, there will be a number of initiatives that will drive the reform of child protection and welfare services. This reform will be encapsulated in the development of the Agency's Child Protection and Welfare Strategy.

This section will outline two of the key initiatives regarding child protection and welfare reform which will form the basis for the strategic intent. These are:

- Reducing cases awaiting allocation to social workers.
- Preparation and developments for Children First.

Effective governance is accomplished by directing and managing activities using good business practices, objectivity, accountability and integrity. Any reform must begin by incorporating learning to date from internal quality assurance reviews, HIQA reports and performance reports and research. A comprehensive review of reports and identified deficits points to the requirement to adopt a whole system approach to effectively reform service delivery. This will involve a re-examination of the following key areas outlined in Table 5.1.

Theme	Learning Points and Source
Governance and Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and management of cases awaiting allocation/Risk Register (Standard Business Process (SBP) Audit, 2015).</li> <li>• Standardised duty structure (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Case transfer policies (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Oversight and management of intake (National Review Panel Annual Report, 2014).</li> </ul>
Process and Standardisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for the SBP (SBP Audit 2015).</li> <li>• Priority rating system review (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Internal transfer of cases (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Threshold guidance (National Review Panel Annual Report, 2014).</li> </ul>
Policy and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making at intake (SBP Audit, 2015).</li> <li>• National Assessment Model (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Assessment and engagement skills and training (National Review Panel Annual Report, 2014).</li> </ul>
Interagency Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threshold understanding for other agencies (SBP Audit, 2015).</li> <li>• Inter-agency working (National Review Panel Annual Report, 2014).</li> </ul>
Information and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on cases screened cases (SBP Audit, 2015).</li> <li>• Validation tools for data (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Review of performance indicators (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> <li>• Database on referrals (Cases Awaiting Allocation Report, 2015).</li> </ul>

Table 5: Summary of reports and sources of information the CPW strategy

The opportunity now exists for the Agency to reflect and widen its vision to focus on a whole system change in the context of a proposed Child Protection and Welfare Strategy. Addressing system changes requires a holistic view of what is happening at organisational, group and service level. A more systemic analysis of all the factors outlined in Table 5.1 allows improvement by identifying gaps, taking corrective action, maximising results, minimising duplication and achieving better synergy.

### **Addressing Cases Awaiting Allocation**

The top priority for the Agency and Minister in 2016 is to reduce the number of cases awaiting allocation to a social worker in child protection and welfare and children in care services. The 2016 budget allocation for Tusla includes a specific provision of funding (€6.1m) which enable a significant reduction in the number of cases where a child has not been allocated a social worker, with a particular focus on those cases classified as being high priority, and that all children in care have an allocated social worker at all times. This will also have an impact on the average waiting times for allocation of a social worker.

To address this issue there is a need for a comprehensive and effective response that takes into account the national review conducted in 2015 and the business case from *Survival to Sustainability*. It is also important to recognise that the recruitment of additional social workers will be a key dependency in relation to reducing the number of cases awaiting allocation. However, a whole system approach will be required to address this issue. This includes the recruitment of other members of the multi-disciplinary teams that contribute to deliver of an effective child protection and welfare service, for example family support workers, social care workers, link workers, access staff and management and administrative support.

This comprehensive response will involve the following:

- Establishment of a project team to oversee and manage this project.
- Targeted recruitment of staff.
- Increased performance reporting.
- Defined approach to resource allocation to address the specific needs of service areas. This will include a process for identifying the long-term resources required to put teams on a sustainable footing and the short-term resources required in some Areas to address backlogs.

In 2016 the following are the targets Tusla expects to achieve:

- National reduction of 60% in cases awaiting allocation by year end.
- National target of less than 5% for cases awaiting allocation designated high priority.
- 100% of children in residential care allocated to a social worker by year end.
- 100% of children in foster care allocated to a social worker by year end.

These targets are based on the current rate of referrals in 2015 and may need to be adjusted based on the timing of the commencement of mandatory reporting under Children First legislation and also recruitment.

### **Children First**

The Children First Act 2015 was enacted on 19 November 2015 and will commence on a phased basis of commencement orders from the Minister. The 2015 Act outlines a number of new measures to further strengthen child protection and welfare systems and processes. In particular, the Act aims to:

- Raise awareness of child abuse and neglect.
- Require mandatory reporting by key professionals and their engagement in the assessment and intervention of concerns to ensure a child's safety. The timing of commencement has yet to be finalised.

- Improve child protection arrangements in organisations providing services to children and ensure that all relevant services develop a Safeguarding Statement which describes how their service aims to safeguard children.
- Provide for inter-agency working and information-sharing in relation to assessments by the Agency.

The responsibilities and principles outlined in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011* and any additional guidance issued by the Minister continue to apply to all in relation to the safeguarding of children. The policy intent is that the legislation will operate side-by-side with the existing non-statutory obligations provided for in *Children First*.

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011* is currently being revised and updated to reflect the legislation. This is to ensure that the guidance continues as a primary reference for all citizens to report concerns. It will provide clarity between the legislation and the existing non-statutory obligations which will continue to operate for all sectors of society.

In anticipation of the commencement of the Act, Tusla has established a National Implementation Team to focus on the development of a Child Protection and Welfare Strategy. The strategy will prioritise the implementation of the required legislative changes. These priority areas will include:

1. Provide regular updates with regard to the implementation of Children First via [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
2. Develop clear systems for receiving and acknowledging reports from mandated persons and others.
3. Develop guidance to support external organisations regarding their legislative obligations to support Tusla in assessment and intervention.
4. Develop guidance to support agencies and services to produce their Safeguarding Statements
5. Provide information and advice to external agencies via an online e-learning platform regarding their responsibilities.
6. Support agencies develop their own training programmes in line with best practice.
7. Develop a register of non-compliance against Safeguarding Statements.
8. Create 17 dedicated in-take points i.e. one per area with dedicated email addresses and phone numbers to receive referrals.

The introduction of the Act will pose a challenge to Tusla in terms of increased service demand to duty and in-take. Additional resources may need to be identified in 2016 to meet this expected increase.

## 6.0 Moving Towards Subsidiarity

### Overview

In 2015 extensive consultation was undertaken with Tusla staff regarding the operational model and organisational structure required to put the Agency on a sustainable footing. The consultation centred on exploring the most effective systems and structures of service delivery within Tusla. This organisational review, in conjunction with the report of the Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency, 2012 recommends that the Agency move from a three to a two tier organisational design with subsidiarity at the core of the model. The two tier model comprises a national office with corporate supports and service delivery units

In practice, this two tier model requires a strong national central office to provide direction and corporate supports to service areas that have delegated authority to manage resources with increased accountability. This subsidiarity model requires Tusla to adhere to the following principles:

- Services are provided at the most practical local level.
- Some services require delivery at a national level due to issues of scale and specialisation.
- The configuration is supported by clear delegated authority to make decisions regarding resource utilisation, in particular budget control and staffing complement.
- There are clear lines of accountability.
- Areas are supported by strong national/central direction and oversight.
- Business support services (HR, finance, ICT, communications, estates) and quality assurance are provided at a national level where appropriate.

### Model Tiers

To provide clarity regarding this model, the functions of the various tiers are described in more detail in this section.

### Functions of the National Office

In the subsidiarity model the national office will have responsibility for a range of functions including:

- Organisational strategy.
- Operational policies and procedures.
- Governance systems and structures.
- Commissioning support unit.
- Corporate identity.
- Resource allocation and service planning.
- Monitoring and evaluation and the setting of clear targets/deliverables.
- Ensuring consistency of approach across local units.
- Leadership and workforce management and development.
- Ensuring most effective business support (HR, finance, ICT, communications, estates) and most effective quality assurance.
- Certain services which lend themselves to a single national delivery, for example residential care, adoption, early years' inspection, educational welfare and some therapeutic services.

To support the National Office in its oversight role and to provide additional supports to the Areas, three clusters will be set up, replacing the four regions. The role of the clusters will differ from the previous regional structure. The primary role of the clusters will be to provide line management support and professional supervision for Area Managers within their remit. The clusters will also be responsible for performance oversight and the co-ordination of business support services.

### Functions of Service Area

Services areas should be responsible for the full range of services, with the exception of those operated

at national delivery, these include:

- Local service planning.
- Implementation of national policy and strategy.
- Quality assurance and risk management.
- Child protection and welfare services.
- Foster care.
- Family support, prevention and early intervention.
- Promotion and development of local inter-agency co-operation and joint working, in particular maximising relationships with the HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs).
- Accountability for compliance with standards/protocols.
- Financial management, employment control and HR issues.

Appropriate delegations will be provided to Areas to ensure there is clarity regarding the levels of authority and responsibility each Area Manager will have under the new model.

### **Steps in 2016**

In 2016 there will be a number of projects to progressively phase in the new operating model and organisational structures. This will also include moving the Agency to higher levels of subsidiarity. Some of these steps will include:

- The completion of the national directorate structures.
- Phasing out the four regions and moving towards three clusters.
- The strengthening of the 17 service areas by allocating additional resources as required. These resources will increase business support capacity and front line service delivery.
- Further development of the CYPSC infrastructure in 2016 In order to build on the strategic potential of the infrastructure and related local planning process.

## 7.0 Multi-Agency Working

To effectively deliver positive outcomes for children, families and communities it is important that a whole system approach is adopted to ensure appropriate coordination and delivery of services. While Tusla often has a lead role for ensuring children are safe and their needs are met, it is clear that the Agency cannot achieve this in isolation and relies strongly on the cooperation, engagement and contribution of key stakeholders and partners.

To ensure children and families receive and experience integrated care and support, it is vital that all external partners and stakeholders are clear about their obligations and other contributions. The sections below outline the importance of a multi-agency approach across various programmes and the role of key organisations in achieving better outcomes for children and supporting a whole child approach.

### **Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

Tusla will continue to adhere to the Communication and Collaboration Protocol in place with DCYA which at a strategic level will support the interface with other Government Departments.

### **Mental Health Services**

In accordance with recent recommendations arising from National Review Panel reports into child deaths and serious incidents, closer joint working relationships and protocols are required for vulnerable children and young people who require priority access to mental health services. A Joint Working Protocol is being developed between Tusla and CAHMS and will be completed in 2016.

### **Disability**

In 2016, Tusla will finalise a joint working protocol with the HSE in order to plan proactively for the needs of children with disabilities. In particular, there will be a focus on clearly delineating responsibilities regarding funding for children in care and aftercare requiring disability services. A key aspect of this engagement will be to enhance supports for parents affected by disability and to ensure there is a multi-agency assessment of their parenting capacity.

### **An Garda Síochána**

An Garda Síochána has a critical role in the protection and welfare of children due to their powers under the Child Care Act 1991. Tusla has strong working relationships with the Gardaí at national and local levels in accordance with Children First. This will be particularly important in 2016 with the introduction of Children First on a statutory basis and the development of out-of-hours services.

Due to the high level of notifications currently being received from An Garda Síochána, Tusla will develop an alternative process for the referral of children which may not meet the threshold for formal notification.

### **Implementation of Meitheal**

Tusla is in the process of implementing Meitheal: a National Practice Model for all Agencies working with Children, Young People and their Families. This model aims to ensure that children and families receive support and help in an integrated and coordinated way that is easily accessible to them.

It is essentially a multi-agency approach which brings together the requisite range of expertise, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of young people at the earliest opportunity. In 2016, Tusla will strengthen partnership working with Public Health Nurses, teachers and their representatives to support their participation in the Meitheal framework.

### **Aftercare**

Young people who are in aftercare and are not in full-time education are not eligible for full aftercare payments and other housing provision. This can lead to a lack of equity for vulnerable young people who require enhanced supports to meet their needs. Tusla will engage with the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Environment to develop a joint response regarding this issue. In particular, Tusla will focus on advocating for the following changes for young people, who were in the care of the State, are over 18 and not in full-time education:

- Every young person leaving care should automatically receive a medical card until such time as they are financially independent or at least until their 25th birthday.
- Tusla will engage with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in regard to awarding a higher rate of Job Seekers Allowance to care leavers. This should be formalised and recognition given to care leavers as a distinct group. Tusla will also negotiate with DSP in relation to setting a national standard regarding housing supports to provide rent deposits for young people leaving care.

### **Youth Justice**

The purpose of the Youth Justice Action Plan is to create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages to service. It is focused on continuing the downward trends in high volume crime and reduce the necessity for detention ensuring better outcomes for children and families. Tusla will develop a specific Joint Working Protocol with Irish Youth Justice Services to establish clarity about individual agency responsibilities and collective responsibilities towards these young people.

### **Education**

Tusla will seek formal engagement with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the context of the DEIS review.

Discussions will also be sought with the DES to identify the school placements held by all children in care and to track education performance for children in care, as well as enhancing the individual education plan and report, as part of the care planning process.

### **Vulnerable Groups**

There is evidence that certain groups are disproportionately represented in crisis intervention responses such as child protection, education welfare and children in care. In 2016, Tusla will conduct an analysis of various vulnerable groups to establish if targeted interventions and supports are required. In particular, the exercise will focus on the travelling community, homelessness and new ethnic groups. The outcome of this exercise will inform policy and practice and service delivery across all services in the Agency, in particular EWS, Child Protection and Welfare and Family Support Services.

### **Implementation of Children First**

The establishment of the Children First Interdepartmental Group on a statutory footing will ensure cross-sectoral and cross-agency representation and coordination on the implementation of the provisions of the Act and the revised National Guidelines. In 2016, Tusla will play a central role in supporting the work of this implementation group and will also develop additional support to assist other agencies as outlined in Chapter 5.

## 8.0 Delivering the Corporate Plan - Year Two

### Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the 2016 Business Plan actions and deliverables organised according to the five Short-term Outputs of the Corporate Plan 2015-17:

- Output A:** Tusla's child protection processes and systems are responding to children at risk in a timely manner.
- Output B:** All processes and systems underpinning children and family policy and services are evidence informed.
- Output C:** A targeted range of family and parenting supports.
- Output D:** Attendance, participation and retention in full-time education is embedded in service delivery for all children.
- Output E:** A fit for purpose organisation to deliver on our strategic intent.

### Programme of Work for 2016

Each section based on the five Short-term Outputs is structured as follows:

- Corporate Plan 2015-17 - actions and associated 2015 key achievements
- Services Areas - specific services relevant to the corporate output will be listed separately. Under each service area the following information will be provided:
  - Statement of Purpose - the intent of the service or programme
  - 2016 and Priorities - the key developments and improvement initiatives for 2016 based on based on the performance statement and Corporate Plan 2015-17
  - Service Activities and Targets - brief description of the day-to-day operations and any relevant service delivery targets

The priorities and actions outlined in this chapter will be described in detail via project and work plans with milestones and timelines, by the responsible Directorates and teams. Progress will be tracked and monitored on a quarterly basis.

It is important to recognise that there are a number of initiatives particularly in relation to HR, Finance, Policy and Quality Assurance, that impact on all Tusla services and operations. For practical reasons these actions are only referred to in one of the Short-term Output sections, however all teams and services need clear processes for the implementation of these cross-cutting requirements.

## Short-term Output Effective Child Protection Systems



Tusla's Child Protection Processes and Systems are Responding to Children at Risk in a Timely Manner

### Key Achievements in 2015 against Strategic Objectives and Short-term Output A

<b>A1.</b>	<p><b>Implement an integrated information system covering referral, assessment and children in care (Strategic Objective 2).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCCIS Project Manager appointed. Pilot system operational in the Mid-West and evaluation ongoing.</li> </ul>
<b>A2</b>	<p><b>Develop and maintain the Child Protection Notification System (CPNS) to secure the safety of children at risk of harm (Strategic Objective 2).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPNS database developed and access to relevant to external agencies provided. National audit of CPNS conducted.</li> </ul>
<b>A3</b>	<p><b>Develop and implement national emergency out-of-hours (EOHS) service (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National EOHS was established, including foster care placement service and on-call social work service.</li> </ul>
<b>A4</b>	<p><b>Implement Children First policy internally and externally on a consistent basis (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children First Toolkit developed. Training Standards developed and Children First Training provided to funded organisations. Safeguarding Guidance Document developed.</li> </ul>
<b>A5</b>	<p><b>Develop integrated reporting for Tusla, incorporating finance, HR and operational data suitable for management team, Board and the Minister (Strategic Objective 2).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Integrated Performance Reports published throughout 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>A6</b>	<p><b>Implement an integrated system to manage and learn from incidents and complaints. (Strategic Objective 8).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tusla complaints and incidents management polices developed for roll-out in 2016 and electronic reporting system for both.</li> </ul>
<b>A7</b>	<p><b>Contribute to the reform of the GAL system (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working group responded to DCYA proposals to reform the GAL system.</li> </ul>

**Service Areas**

The following table sets out an overview of the service areas relevant to Corporate Output A.

**Child Protection and Welfare Services**

**Child Protection and Welfare Teams**

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Child Protection and Welfare service is to meet the Agency’s statutory responsibilities in accordance with Child Care Act, 1991 and Children Act 2001. The Agency is required to identify and promote the welfare of child at risk or in need of protection and to provide family support services.

**2016 Priorities**

- Ensure an approach to responding to referrals which consistently provides an efficient, effective and proportionate response.
- Targeted national reduction of cases awaiting allocation to child protection and welfare, children in care and retrospective cases of abuse.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Update national structure for child protection and welfare with a lead service director responsible for child protection and welfare policy and implementation.
- Develop Child Protection Welfare Strategy to provide a framework to improve the structure and responsiveness of duty/in-take teams.
- Ensure a consistent approach regarding screening and assessment of referrals in all Areas to include implementing a collaborative and group decision making approach to the acceptance of referrals in all Areas i.e. Review Evaluate Direct (RED) teams.
- Create 17 dedicated in-take points i.e. one per Area with dedicated e-mail addresses and phone numbers to receive referrals.
- Provide renewed training and guidance to ensure greater consistency in the application of the standard business processes and thresholds across the service.
- Review and establish baseline staffing levels for child protection and welfare services in all Areas.
- Identify a process to improve compliance with HIQA child protection and welfare standards in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Directorate.
- Provide an approach for a responsive and effective service for children in vulnerable groups for example travellers, refugees, new Irish, homeless, children in direct provision and children with disabilities.
- Establish an International Social Services team in the National Operations office.
- Establish a dedicated Intervention Team to provide additional supports in situations where urgent improvement is required.
- Providing additional guidance for staff in the application of the Standard Business Processes to support the use of professional judgment.
- Complete the review of the Section 3 Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse and Neglect and develop implementation plan to ensure effective application in all Areas.
- Implement a process to manage retrospective cases of abuse in all Areas in accordance with the policy. Additional resources will be assigned to address the backlog of retrospective cases of abuse as part of the cases awaiting allocation.
- Develop an alternative process with An Garda Síochána for the referral of children who may not meet the threshold for formal notification.

### *Cases Awaiting Allocation*

- Appoint a project manager and establish a multi-disciplinary project team to focus on addressing open cases awaiting allocation. The project manager and team will regularly review performance information regarding cases awaiting allocation to assess progress. This will include developing systems to measure urgent or emergency cases.
- Produce a detailed two year project plan that outlines the process of significantly reducing cases awaiting allocation in 2016 and 2017. This will include a plan that outlines how resources will be deployed, in an objective and transparent basis, in each Area to address the backlog and to put the service on a sustainable footing. It will also include details regarding short term resource deployment for specified Areas that may not require additional long term capacity.
- Outlined below are the targets regarding cases awaiting allocation for 2016:
  - National reduction of 60% in cases awaiting allocation by year end.
  - National target of less than 5% for cases awaiting allocation designated high priority.
  - 100% of children in residential care allocated to a social worker by year end.
  - 100% of children in foster care allocated to a social worker by year end.
- Implement a standardised approach to the management and monitoring of cases awaiting allocation. This will be achieved by a thorough application of thresholds, timely diversion to appropriate family support services, ensuring a focus on high risk cases and the timely closure of cases to facilitate sufficient throughput of work.

## National Childcare Information System

### **Statement of Purpose**

The goal of NCCIS is to create an integrated national Child Welfare and Protection system to support the care of every child and support the management of every case from first contact with Tusla social work department through to case closure.

### **2016 Priorities**

- Prepare for the implementation of NCCIS on a national basis in 2017.
- Ensure appropriate resources are in place to support effective roll-out of NCCIS.

### **Service Activities and Targets**

- Secure DPER approval to project plan and planned capital expenditure for 2016 associated with the project.
- Produce project and resourcing plan to implement phase 2, the baseline NCCIS ready for national roll-out including standard business processes.
- Complete ICT network upgrades in preparation for NCCIS roll-out to ensure technical readiness on a national basis.
- Plan for data migration and commence data migration for selected Areas in 2016.
- Develop NCCIS training programme for all system users in advance of roll-out of NCCIS in 2017.
- Provide service release to support NCCIS in Mid-West Area.
- Recruitment of project and operation support for NCCIS.

**Emergency out of Hours Service (EOHS)**

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the EOHS is to cooperate with and support An Garda Síochána in the execution of their duties and responsibilities under section 12(3) of the Child Care Act 1991 and referrals made under Sect 8.5 of the Refugee Act 1996. The EOHS provides a call centre with access to a local on-call Social Worker to An Garda Síochána for consultation and advice. The EOHS also provides placements for children under Section 12(3) of the Child Care Act 1991 and Section 8.5 of the Refugee Act 1996.

**2016 Priorities**

- Improve the delivery of the EOHS as a nationally led and nationally delivered service.
- Produce monthly performance reports.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Establish the EOHS as a module on the NCCIS.
- Produce monthly performance reports.
- Coordinate the three existing out-of-hours services into a national service with the governance structure, business processes and supporting infrastructure to ensure capacity to efficiently address emergency out-of-hours referrals and to effectively support day service provision.

**Alternative Care Services**

**Foster Care Services**

**Statement of Purpose**

Tusla has statutory responsibility to provide for the protection and care of children whose parents have not given or are unlikely to be able to give adequate protection and care. 90% of children in statutory care are in foster care.

**2016 Priorities**

- Implement a strategic approach to the provision of foster care as part of the Alternative Care Strategy.
- Increase the number of approved statutory foster carers.
- Ensure 100% of children in care have an allocated social worker.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Strengthen systems to increase the capacity of foster care panels.
- Increase the number of relative foster carers who have been assessed to 80% by year end.
- Improve the percentage of general foster carers with an allocated link worker to 90% by year end.
- Improve the percentage of relative foster carers with an allocated link worker to 85% by year end.
- Improve compliance with foster care standards in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Directorate.
- Reduce reliance on private foster care arrangement by developing a strategic approach to recruitment of foster carers to ensure adequate supply of carers to meet the needs of children in care.
- Provide extra supports for foster carers.
- Identify strategic priorities to inform foster care services as part of the Alternative Care Strategy.
- Establish a National Foster Care register.

- Conduct a review of the National Leaving and Aftercare Plan, the Foster Care Committee Best Practice and the Alternative Care Handbook.
- Establish children's forums as commissioned from EPIC.

## General Residential Services

### Statement of Purpose

Children are placed in residential care in order to provide a safe, nurturing environment for them when they cannot live at home or in an alternative family environment such as foster care. The requirements for placing a child in a children's residential centre and for the running of these centres are laid out in the Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations 1995. Residential care aims to provide a physically, emotionally and psychologically safe space, in a planned way, in which children and young people can heal, develop and move forward in their lives. Residential care can be provided by a statutory, voluntary or private provider.

### 2016 Priorities

- Improving management and governance structures in the new national structure for residential care with a clear focus on improving quality and safety of services.
- Reduce dependency on residential care by developing intensive community based supports.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Reduce dependency on residential care by developing intensive community based supports.
- Ensure all children in care have an allocated social worker and a written care plan to include a written school report which attests to their current attainments and any assistance they may require.
- Develop a mechanism to report on health and well-being of children in care.
- Develop an indicator for children entering care for the first time to include gender, age and reason for entering care.
- Put long-term measures in place to ensure that children are matched to appropriate settings with emphasis on reducing or eliminating the need for residential or other placements for children aged 12 years or younger.
- Conduct a review of the suitability of current residential services for older children with challenging behaviour and enhance service capacity to meet their needs.
- Implement National Information System for Children's Residential Services.
- Enhance cooperative working between Children's Residential Services, An Garda Síochána including diversion, young people's probation and Irish Youth Justice Services.

**Special Care Services**

**Statement of Purpose**

Special care is short term, stabilising and safe care in a secure therapeutic environment. The aim of the special care intervention is to provide an individualised programme of support and skilled therapeutic intervention which will enable the child/young person to stabilise and then move to a less secure placement based on the assessed needs of that child/young person.

**2016 Priorities**

- Increase bed capacity in special care through capital programme of investment
- Ensure compliance with the new special care regulations.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Enhance governance arrangements in special care and further integrate into National Children's Residential Services.
- Increase special care capacity from 17 to 30 beds through the completion of new builds at Crannóg Nua.
- Develop business case for additional staffing for 2017 associated with the increased bed capacity.
- Work in partnership with Youth Justice and HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to ensure provision is designed to meet young people's needs, including development of a forensic service by CAMHS.
- Enhance cooperative working between Children's Residential Services, An Garda Síochána including Diversion, Young People's Probation and Irish Youth Justice Services.
- Prepare special care for the enactment of Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011 that will see special care centres becoming registered as Designated Centres.
- Target special care use for short-term stabilising interventions.
- Continue to progress multi-disciplinary working in special care with a view to enhance special care programme planning and outcomes for the young people placed in the service.

**Aftercare Services**

**Statement of Purpose**

Tusla provides leaving and aftercare services for young people which are responsive and relevant to each young person's circumstances under Section 45 of the Childcare Act 1991. All young people who have had a care history with the Agency are entitled to an aftercare service. Services are provided on the basis of assessment of need, age and the length of time the young person was in care.

**2016 Priorities**

- Preparation for Child Care (Amendment) Act 2016.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Map the current provision of aftercare services and monitor the accessibility of services for all those who have been in care or are preparing to leave care.
- Conduct a review of current metrics. Identify new metrics to ensure that all eligible young people have an aftercare plan.
- Identify and report on the financial outlay regarding aftercare support services, delineated by areas of expenditure.

## Adoption Services

### Statement of Purpose

Tusla plays an important role in assessing possible adoptive parents and also provides services to people who were adopted or fostered and may wish to trace their birth family.

### 2016 Priorities

- Develop adoption service structures to improve consistency and streamlining of adoption services.
- Reduce the waiting lists for information and tracing services.
- Establish a secure, accessible and centralised interim archive for the protection of adoption records.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Recruit a National Manager for the Adoption Service.
- Develop National Adoption Information Register to address requirements of the Adoption Information and Tracing Act and roll-out of a public awareness campaign.
- Produce a Children in Care to Adoption Handbook.
- Ensure continued streamlining of the newly established National Adoption Service and develop a standard business process for information and tracing including a standardised file.
- Put measures in place regarding the interim storage and protection of historical records.
- Establish a central location for archiving adoption records.
- Develop training programme for Adoption Services staff to improve consistency in professional practice.
- Reduce the numbers of client on the waiting list for an information and tracing service to less than 200 by year end.
- Reduce the waiting time for information and tracing services as follows:
  - Provision of non identifying information – target less than eight weeks by year end
  - Waiting time from formal application to allocation of a social worker for a full tracing service, targets as follows: priority one, three months by year end; priority two, six months by year end; and all other applications 12 months by year end.

## b

## Short-term Output Evidence-based Services

All Processes and Systems Underpinning Children and Family Policy and Services are Evidence Informed

### Key Achievements in 2015 against Strategic Objectives and Short-term Output B

<b>B1.</b>	<p><b>Establish and maintain a standardised National Policy Catalogue (Strategic Objective 7)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A policy catalogue now in place and policy oversight group established.</li> </ul>
<b>B2</b>	<p><b>Implement the Meitheal model to enable integrated service delivery through prevention, partnership and family support (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievements for this action are now captured under Output C.</li> </ul>
<b>B3</b>	<p><b>Operationalise Government policy and legislation and its integration into service delivery (Strategic Objective 7).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submissions made to the DCYA regarding the impact of legislative changes including Children First, Aftercare, Adoption and Family Relationships Acts. Briefing sessions provided to staff regarding Family Relationships Act.</li> </ul>
<b>B4</b>	<p><b>Develop a strategic approach to quality assurance that supports continuous improvement and positions Tusla as a self-evaluating organisation and meets its regulatory compliance requirements (Strategic Objective 8).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality Assurance Framework drafted and quality audit methodology developed. Learning reports regarding HIQA inspections and complaints developed.</li> </ul>
<b>B5</b>	<p><b>Generate evidence to support learning, continuous improvement, service design and decision-making (Strategic Objective 8).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five national quality reviews conducted. Learning reports regarding HIQA inspections and complaints developed.</li> </ul>
<b>B6</b>	<p><b>Develop the appropriate mechanisms to engage with children and key partners effectively (Strategic Objective 3).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievements for this action are now captured under Output C</li> </ul>
<b>B7</b>	<p><b>Develop a capability to capture, share and disseminate research on national and international best practice (Strategic Objective 7).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research strategy developed.</li> </ul>
<b>B8</b>	<p><b>Enhance our knowledge management systems and capability to support the development of our services and our people (Strategic Objective 7).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See B5 above</li> </ul>
<b>B9</b>	<p><b>Develop metrics that demonstrate how Tusla is performing and to measure the impact it is having on children, families and communities (Strategic Objective 8).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rationalisation and development of new metrics completed. Outcomes based metrics project commissioned.</li> </ul>

<b>B10</b>	<b>Enhance participation and personalisation of children and families in policy formulation and review (Strategic Objective 3).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievements for this action are now captured under Output C.</li> </ul>
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## Service Areas

The following tables sets out an overview of the service areas relevant to Corporate Output B.

Policy and Strategy Directorate	
<p><b>Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>The Policy and Strategy Directorate provides a specialist advisory function to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to inform long term strategic planning and the development of key policy actions to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.</p>	<p><b>2016 Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish governance framework to ensure consistent development of policies, procedures, protocols and guidance documents.</li> <li>Implement Children First in line with legislative commencement dates.</li> <li>Develop an Alternative Care Strategy.</li> <li>Conduct an analysis of vulnerable groups to establish if targeted interventions and supports are required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities and Targets</b></p> <p><i>Child Protection and Welfare Strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a Child Protection and Welfare Strategy that incorporates learning from all internal and external reviews of services, new Children First requirements and national and international best practices.</li> <li>As part of an initial scoping of an equality strategy, an analysis of vulnerable groups will be conducted to establish if targeted interventions and supports are required.</li> </ul> <p><i>Policy Development and Review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a National Policy Oversight Group to ensure effective governance over the development of National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidance (PPPG).</li> <li>Audit the current policy catalogue and establish a structured process for reviewing PPPG in line with service priorities.</li> <li>Improve communication in respect of policy development and ensure staff and public have access to all relevant PPPGs.</li> </ul> <p><i>Children First</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a National Implementation Project Team for Children First and nominate persons to the Children First Inter-departmental Group.</li> <li>Produce a project plan to support implementation of Children First.</li> <li>Put measures in place to support Areas preparing for mandatory reporting including additional practitioner, administration and management staffing resources to address expected increase in demand.</li> <li>Establish an appropriately resourced register of non-compliance.</li> <li>Support the development of child safeguarding statements both internally and with other organisations.</li> </ul>	

- Produce information and advice for external organisations including the development of an e-learning resource regarding the new requirements.
- Identify authorised officers in the Agency in accordance with Children First.
- Develop protocols for mandated persons assisting and pertaining to the disclosure of third party information.
- Define and develop metrics regarding Children First requirements.

### *Alternative Care Strategy*

- Produce an Alternative Care Strategy including a national and international review of best practice and wide consultation with key stakeholders. The strategy will include actions to position residential care and foster care in line with organisational need and best practice.
- Establish contractual arrangements with private foster care providers in order to regulate cost, volume and quality of service.
- Review and revise priority areas of National Alternative Care Policy including the National Aftercare Policy to reflect new provisions in the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015.
- Produce a report of the experience of foster care among foster carers, social workers and children in care.
- Establish a national foster care register
- Develop supporting initiatives to help improve the numbers of relative foster carers awaiting assessment.
- Support operations by developing intensive community-based support packages for children and particularly older teenagers in care.
- Develop a model of intensive support regarding foster care arrangements.
- Implement new performance and activity metrics in line with the performance statement.
- Establish a professionally managed central repository for the records for all children in care including records created in non-statutory agencies.

### *Research*

- Establish Research Ethics Committee.
- Complete and publish Research Needs Analysis.
- Establish an appropriately resourced National Research Office. This should include identifying opportunities for collaboration.
- Information stars to be assigned in each Area.
- Scope and issue a tender for a longitudinal study over ten years of young people who leave care to map their transition into adulthood.

### *Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiatives*

- Produce an evidence-based toolkit for social workers in conjunction with the Centre for Effective Services.

## Quality Assurance Directorate

### Statement of Purpose

The Quality Assurance Directorate is responsible for driving and supporting continuous improvement and the delivery of consistent high quality services to all service users, regardless of location. The Directorate also develops mechanisms to embed self-evaluation to ensure Tusla is a self-aware organisation that knows and understands where its strengths and weaknesses are and addresses risk.

### 2016 Priorities

- Implement the Quality Assurance Framework and complete self-assessment cycle in all Tusla services.
- Conduct a review of child protection welfare and children in care services to assess their impact and outcomes delivered for children.
- Implement Tell Us – Tusla’s complaints and feedback system.
- Embed risk and incident management practices and systems.
- Enhance integrated performance reporting and oversight systems.

### Activities and Targets

#### *Consumer and Public Affairs*

- Implement Tell Us complaints and feedback policy and procedure.
- Roll out the NIMS complaint module.
- Conduct complaints training programmes for all levels of staff.
- Establish innovative channels for services user to make complaints.
- Conduct national service user survey.
- Produce quarterly synthesis reports based on complaints and feedback to improve service delivery.
- Roll out protected disclosure and good faith policies and procedures.
- Improve Tusla FOI systems at national and local level.

#### *Performance Reporting, Analysis and Metrics Development*

- Establish an ICT solution for presenting and analysing performance information to support the further roll-out of performance dashboards at an Area and service level.
- Publish performance review methodology guidance.
- Review and rationalise current metrics and develop new metrics as required, including outcome based metrics and the metrics requested in the performance statement.
- Implement information governance policy and procedure.
- Publish the 2014 Review of Adequacy Report and develop the 2015 report.
- Establish a clear business intelligence system that supports analysis of performance information to identify risks, trends and opportunities for learning and improvement.

#### *Quality Reviews and Audits, including monitoring of all Tusla services*

- Implement the Quality Assurance Framework, including a full self-assessment cycle for all services in 2016.
- Conduct a review of child protection and welfare and children in care services to assess impact and the outcomes delivered for children.
- Conduct a second annual review of cases awaiting allocation to child protection and welfare services.
- Conduct themed audits and reviews in services, including Educational Welfare, PPFS and DSGBV.
- Reform and integrate the statutory monitoring service for Tusla services into the overall quality assurance framework.
- Embed and further develop the process for tracking recommendations from internal and external sources.

### *Risk and incident management systems*

- Implement the Tusla risk management policy and procedure throughout the Agency. Implement the Tusla incident management policy and procedure throughout the Agency.
- Full roll out of NIMS incident module throughout the Agency.
- Conduct national review of risk registers.
- Produce synthesis and analysis reports of incidents and risks to improve service delivery on a quarterly basis.

## Registration and Inspection of Non-Statutory Residential Services

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Registration and Inspection service is to register and inspect Non-Statutory Children's Residential Centres under Part VIII of the Child Care Act 1991.

### **2016 Priorities**

- Reform of the inspection and monitoring programme for private and voluntary children's residential services.
- Recruitment campaigns to increase service capacity
- Implementation of risk assessment process and establishment of centre risk registers

### **Service Activities and Targets**

- Increase management capacity.
- Reform and improve the registration and inspection process in line with best regulatory practice.
- Produce and maintain a centre risk register to ensure inspection is risk-based and intelligence-driven.
- Ensure the registration of all private and voluntary children's residential centres due for renewal in 2016.

## Short-term Output Family and Parenting Support



A Targeted Range of Family and Parenting Supports

### Key Achievements in 2015 against Strategic Objectives and Short-term Output C

<b>C1.</b>	<p><b>Support parents through active interventions, cross-sectoral activities and an integrated service delivery model (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Children and Young People Service Committees (CYPSC) were enhanced with additional co-ordinator posts.</li> </ul>
<b>C2</b>	<p><b>Develop the provision/commission of a psychology service (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p>
<b>C3</b>	<p><b>Develop and expand Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service (ACTS) (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Tusla/HSE CAHMS National Operations Group was established. Therapeutic plans in place for all young people in special care.</li> </ul>
<b>C4</b>	<p><b>Develop revised Alternative Care Strategy (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievements in respect of this action are set out in Output B.</li> </ul>
<b>C5</b>	<p><b>Develop and implement a Commissioning Strategy (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Commissioning Strategy developed.</li> </ul>
<b>C6</b>	<p><b>Develop a cohesive suite of services to support victims of sexual and domestic violence (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a national governance structure and consolidation of a national budget and grants register. Additional staff recruited.</li> </ul>
<b>C7</b>	<p><b>Ensure the full participation of Family Resource Centres in the Service Delivery Framework (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Meitheal resulting in increased interaction between Family Resource Centres and local child and family services.</li> <li>National Counselling Programme established.</li> </ul>
<b>C8</b>	<p><b>Develop and implement a Parenting Support Strategy to ensure accessible and friendly access to services (Strategic Objective 3).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parenting Support Strategy developed and published. Parent Participation supports developed.</li> </ul>
<b>C9</b>	<p><b>Implement the Meitheal model to enable integrated service delivery through prevention, partnership and family support (PPFS) (Strategic Objective 1).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Meitheal and staffing structure in place. Performance Indicators and definitions for Meitheal established. National Training Strategy progressed with 130 trained trainers.</li> </ul>

<b>C10</b>	<b>Develop the appropriate mechanisms to engage with children and key partners effectively (Strategic Objective 3).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Working Group on Participation established. Participation documentation developed.</li> </ul>
<b>C11</b>	<b>Enhance participation and personalisation of children and families in policy formulation and review (Strategic Objective 3).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forums for Children in Care established.</li> </ul>
<b>C12</b>	<b>Introduce a registration and standards-based Early Years Inspectorate, supported by systems that are intelligence driven (Strategic Objective 8).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National governance structure established. Recruitment of additional management posts. New models of inspection introduced. Inspection rates increased by 68%.</li> </ul>

### Service Areas

The following table sets out an overview of the service areas relevant to Corporate Output C.

Prevention, Partnership and Family Support	
<p><b>Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>Tusla is committed to providing high quality services to children and families at the earliest opportunity across all levels of need. Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) involves providing help to children and families at an early stage to prevent situations getting worse. This involves working in partnership with families, other agencies and professionals to respond quickly to the needs of children.</p>	<p><b>2016 Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the implementation of Meitheal within Agency and partner organisations.</li> <li>Develop a National Strategy on Participation of Children and Young People.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Activities and Targets</b></p> <p><i>Meitheal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate PPFS programme delivery through Tusla’s existing structures and fully integrate with Tusla’s child protection and welfare and alternative care services.</li> <li>Complete the implementation of PPFS organisational structures and associated resources.</li> <li>Provide training, coaching and mentoring to implement Meitheal for Tusla staff and partner agencies.</li> <li>Establish child and family support networks in each Area.</li> <li>Conduct an implementation audit regarding PPFS.</li> <li>Complete the development and implementation of metrics and KPIs for PPFS, including the metrics requested in the performance statement.</li> <li>Conduct an assessment of service demand levels from vulnerable groups and develop subsequent service plan.</li> <li>Full implementation of Meitheal/social work interface protocol.</li> <li>Establish steering committees under each CYPSC.</li> <li>Publish quarterly information in relation to family supports provided.</li> </ul> <p><i>Participation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trainers provided training on participatory practice – 40 trainers trained.</li> <li>Establish process to provide advice in all areas regarding consulting with young people on policies and issues that affect their lives – all Areas.</li> </ul>	

- Complete the establishment of forums for children in care – 17 forums established.
- Complete Tusla Participation Strategy to deliver on commitments under the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015-2020).
- Create mechanisms to provide children with the opportunity to be heard in judicial proceedings affecting them, including through independent representatives where appropriate.
- Publish National Children's Charter for Tusla.

#### *Parenting Supports*

- Further develop Parenting 24/7 and develop a communications strategy to increase accessibility.
- Publish and disseminate the Parent Participation Toolkit and establish national criteria for local funding grants.

### Family Resource Centre Programme

#### **Statement of Purpose**

##### *National Family Resource Centre (FRC) Programme*

- To support all FRCs achieve optimum outcomes for the young people and families they serve.

##### *National Counselling Grants Scheme*

- To ensure that all recipients of Tusla funding under the Counselling Grants Scheme deliver high quality counselling services.

#### **2016 Priorities**

- Integrate FRCs and counselling programmes into Tusla's Service Delivery Framework.
- Ensure the readiness of Family Resource Centres to assist with the refugee resettlement programme.

#### **Service Activities and Targets**

- Initiate a review of funding for all FRCs and counselling organisations to ensure grant aid is targeted at those organisations that best meet the requirements of the Agency.
- Transfer responsibility for the administration of local counselling grants to all Area Managers.
- Integrate FRCs into the Meitheal programme, with a target of 200 Meitheals completed in 2016.
- Integrate counselling organisations into the Meitheal programme, with a target of 50 Meitheals completed in 2016.
- Prepare FRCs to assist with refugee resettlement programme.

### Children and Young People Service Committees (CYPSC)

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the CYPSC structure is to improve outcomes for children and young people through local and national inter-agency working by bringing together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers. They provide a forum for joint planning and coordination of activity to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. CYPSC plans include consideration of local needs across the five outcome areas set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*.

#### **2016 Priorities**

- CYPSC established in each area.
- PPFS and Meitheal linked to the work of the CYPSCs.

### Activities and Targets

- Complete the roll-out of CYPSCs on a national basis.
- Ensure all CYPSCs have the appropriate leadership and support structures.
- Establish structures in 60% CYPSCs to ensure there are strong links with the PFFS programme by year end.
- Put mechanisms in place to ensure information regarding local need from all CYPSCs informs the allocation of national and local funding including commissioning.
- Develop county level Children's and Young People's Plans.
- Establish a reporting framework for CYPSCs.
- Implement guidance on enhancing children's and young people's participation in CYPSCs.
- Establish a PFFS steering group as a subgroup of CYPSCs in all Areas.

### Commissioning

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Tusla's commissioning process is to ensure a clearly defined approach to deciding how to use the total resources available for children and families in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable, proportionate and sustainable way. Commissioning in Tusla will ensure that services have key objectives enabling commissioned services to become targeted, evidence informed, outcome-based, value for money driven and future-proofed.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Implement the commissioning approach with all externally funded organisations.
- Enhance governance arrangements with externally funded organisations.

#### Activities and Targets

- Establish an appropriately resourced commissioning support unit.
- Establish the appropriate governance arrangements and delegations regarding commissioning responsibilities with budget holders.
- Engage with 100% of external providers who will be subject to commissioning by year end.
- Procure an online commissioned service management system and ensure all commissioned services are active on the system by year end.
- Develop an outcomes framework and KPIs for commissioning.
- Ensure 100% of external providers have service level agreements by year end.
- Provide support to commissioners regarding market facilitation and commissioning, and produce a market position statements for four areas.
- Engage with DPER in relation to a cross-departmental approach to commissioning.
- Create five pilot sites, including DSGBV, to support full roll-out of commissioning strategy.

## Tusla Therapeutic Services

### Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service

#### Statement of Purpose

The Assessment, Consultation and Therapy Service (ACTS) is a national specialised clinical service which has been developed in order to provide multi-disciplinary consultation, assessment and focused interventions to young people who have high risk behaviours associated with complex clinical needs.

ACTS also supports other professionals in their ongoing work with young people and their families. The service includes psychology, social work, speech and language therapy, addiction counseling and social care who work together to inform collective practice.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Enhance the capacity of the ACTS team to meet the needs of children in care who present with challenging behaviour.
- Provide services for children who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour.

#### Activities and Targets

- Establish Tusla services for children and young people who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour in order to enhance current multi-agency provision.
- Provide on-site therapeutic services to young people in secure settings in Ireland (special care and the Children Detention Schools) and develop individual therapeutic plans in respect of each young person.
- Provide support to young people who are returning to community settings to help them re-engage with mainstream services as appropriate.
- Provide clinical intervention and systemic support to the wider childcare/mental health system.
- Provide consultation in the community for children at significant risk of placement in secure settings.

### Youth Justice

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Youth Justice Action Plan is to create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages to service.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Participate in the delivery and monitoring of the Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018.
- Establish an expanded ACTS service for Oberstown Children Detention School.

#### Service Activities and Targets

- Ensure there is a focus on youth crime and the youth justice system in CYPSCs.
- Engage with other youth service providers to promote the use of crime prevention supports and a standardised working ethos in delivery of youth services including reviewing and updating the Draft Protocol for Working Together: HSE Social Workers and Children Detention Schools.
- Establish a joint working protocol with Irish Youth Justice Services regarding collective and individual agency responsibilities.

### Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Services

#### Statement of Purpose

The National Domestic and Sexual Violence Services programme provides a single line of accountability for DSGBV service in line with Tusla commitments under the Second National Strategy for the sector. It also provides oversight and support for the delivery of effective and accessible services that respond to the needs of women, men, children and families that experience domestic violence and sexual violence.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Establish a full National DSGBV Service Team.
- Implement a standard monitoring and reporting framework.
- Contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

#### Service Activities and Targets

- Undertake inter-agency and collaborative working with non-governmental organisations and statutory partners to address prevention of DSGBV and develop appropriate responses for victims.
- Contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention.
- Implement governance and oversight system with standard reporting framework for funded DSGBV services.
- Establish information capability to support delivery of DSGBV Services.
- Implement the DSGBV Training Plan.
- Produce protocols for the referral of victims to and from support services.
- Establish an integrated national helpline services for victims of DSGBV.
- Provide support for child witnesses of DSGBV.
- Increase access to services through enhanced outreach services and additional emergency and supported accommodation spaces.

### Homelessness

#### Statement of Purpose

Homelessness Liaison was established in October 2015, to ensure Tusla meets its statutory obligations and organisational objectives in the area of homelessness. This involves engaging with statutory and voluntary agencies that provide services and supports to children, young people and families experiencing homelessness.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Finalise and implement protocol for joint working between Tusla and the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE).
- Provide accessibility to support services within Family Support and Community Services.
- Provide appropriate responses to the child protection and welfare issues which arise within the homeless population.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Produce joint working protocol between Tusla and the DHRE. Expand protocol to include HSE, EWS and DSGBV. Hold information briefings on the agreed protocol.
- Establish networks within FRCs offering signposting services to families experiencing homelessness.
- Conduct an analysis regarding the numbers of homeless families accessing the services to inform service delivery.
- Ensure families experiencing homelessness have access to appropriate and proportionate supports.
- Ensure a continuum of support for transient families where possible using national frameworks such as Meitheal.

## Early Years Services Regulation

### Statement of Purpose

Early Years Services (EYS) is an overarching term that includes pre-school services. Tusla is responsible for inspecting pre-schools, play groups, nurseries, crèches, day-care and similar services which cater for children aged 0-six, under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.

### 2016 Priorities

- Implement processes and systems for new regulations.
- Establish central registration office.
- Implement an ICT system to support intelligence driven inspections.
- Re-register all services that were deemed registered on 1 January 2014.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Re-register all services that were deemed registered on 1 January 2014.
- Produce and implement a judgment framework and new inspection policy and procedure based on the new regulations.
- Develop and implement new processes and systems to support legislative responsibilities (primary legislation and forthcoming regulations).
- A central registration office will be established and an ICT system developed to support intelligence driven inspections.
- Produce and implement inspection assessment tools based on new regulations.
- Establish an appropriately resourced registration office and implement processes to register new and existing services.
- Establish a system to centralise the receipt of complaints and significant event notifications.
- Conduct extensive consultation with the early years service regarding the new registration and inspection system.

## Psychological Welfare Services

### Statement of Purpose

Under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to provide services relating to the psychological welfare of children and their families. In 2016, the Agency will seek to advance the provision of such services.

### 2016 Priorities

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the development of services regarding the psychological wellbeing of children and families.

### **Service Activities and Targets**

- Identify current service provision regarding psychological and therapeutic services.
- Identify additional services requirements with demonstrable linkages to primary care, mental health and CAMHS.
- Co-commission the provision of services with the HSE to ensure integration and avoid duplication.
- Track and assess the impact of interventions.

## Short-term Output Promoting Full-time Education



Attendance, Participation and Retention in Full-Time Education is Embedded in Service Delivery for All Children.

### Key Achievements in 2015 against Strategic Objectives and Short-term Output D

<b>D1.</b>	<b>Develop the statutory EWS in partnership with schools and parents and in the context of an evolving educational environment (Strategic Objective 1).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSCL oversight strengthened through annual plan. New integrated management structure designed. Additional Educational Welfare staffing in place.</li> </ul>
<b>D2</b>	<b>Firmly establish Educational Welfare interventions within the Service Delivery Framework (Strategic Objective 1).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EWS metrics now incorporated in quarterly reports.</li> </ul>
<b>D3</b>	<b>Support schools, parents and children effectively in relation to engagement in education whether school-based or otherwise (Strategic Objective 1).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New organisational design for EWS approved by Board. Consultation on section 14 assessment guidelines. SCP governance strengthened by formal funding contracts.</li> </ul>
<b>D4</b>	<b>Introduce a registration and standards-based Early Years Inspectorate, supported by systems that are intelligence driven (Strategic Objective 8).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements for this action are now captured under Output C.</li> </ul>
<b>D5</b>	<b>Support the effective participation and achievement in education of all children in care (Strategic Objective 1).</b>

### Service Areas

The following tables sets out an overview of the service areas relevant to Corporate Output D.

Educational Welfare Services	
<p><b>Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>The EWS is a national service that holds the statutory responsibility for ensuring that all children attend school or otherwise receive an education. It comprises the statutory EWS and is supported by non-statutory services, HSCL and SCP.</p>	<p><b>2016 Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the new integrated management structure.</li> <li>• Strengthen governance within the SCP programme.</li> <li>• Continue to align EWS with Tusla's Service Delivery Framework.</li> <li>• Establish systems to monitor the educational participation of all children in care.</li> </ul>

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Implement the new integrated management structure.
- Produce a three year plan for the SCP.
- Strengthen governance within the SCP.
- Produce outcomes framework for SCP regarding planning and evaluation.
- Provide Children First training for EWS staff.
- Develop performance metrics and KPIs for all EWS services.
- Establish protocol with Alternative Care teams regarding developing education plans for children in care.
- Discussions will be sought with DES to map education performance for children in care.
- Establish a system for recording educational journey and outcomes.
- Produce a policy to support vulnerable children’s education attainment.
- Disseminate School Attendance Strategy to all schools.
- Develop and roll-out an ICT system recording school attendance returns.

**Education Outside of Recognised Schools.**

**Statement of Purpose**

Under Section 14 of the Educational Welfare Act, 2000, the EWS is charged with ensuring that all children educated at home or in non-recognised schools, receive a minimum education.

**2016 Priorities**

- Transfer of Section 14 to the Quality Assurance Directorate.
- Reform Section 14 processes and systems.

**Service Activities and Targets**

- Submit a report on Section 14 assessment guidance to DES.
- Complete the transfer of Section 14 to the Quality Assurance Directorate.
- Produce and implement new policies and procedures for Section 14 registration and assessment.

## Short-term Output

### An Organisation Fit for Purpose



A Fit for Purpose Organisation To Deliver on the Agency's intent.

#### Key Achievements in 2015 against Strategic Objectives and Short -term Output E

<b>E1.</b>	<b>Develop organisation structures and processes to support the achievement of Tusla's corporate objectives (Strategic objective 2).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodology developed and progress reports prepared on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul>
<b>E2</b>	<b>Develop an ICT Strategy, including the utilisation of a managed service (Strategic objective 2).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT infrastructure for Brunel office and new sites established.</li> </ul>
<b>E3</b>	<b>Develop and implement a National Estates Strategy (Strategic objective 2).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estates Strategy developed and implementation commenced - property audit and validation of estates inventory completed.</li> </ul>
<b>E4</b>	<b>Develop an evidence-based resource allocation model (Strategic objective 4).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of resource allocation model commenced.</li> </ul>
<b>E5</b>	<b>Develop a value-for-money strategy (Strategic objective 4).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic partner to develop the value-for-money strategy procured.</li> </ul>
<b>E6</b>	<b>Develop a systematic approach to managing risk within a defined risk appetite (Strategic objective 8).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk register process and corporate and directorate risk registers established. Risk management policy issued for consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>E7</b>	<b>Enhance financial and governance processes (Strategic objective 2).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing financial controls being revised and new processes for governance arrangements with external funded agencies developed.</li> <li>Produced Tusla's first Annual Financial Statement for 2014 and established a separate budget and reporting for Residential Services.</li> </ul>
<b>E8</b>	<b>Develop and implement a performance management system to align individual and Agency objectives to inform training and development requirements (Strategic objective 5).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training needs analysis concluded with mid-level managers to identify priority learning and development needs and new standardised training courses developed in response.</li> <li>Completion of Strategy for Continuing Professional Development.</li> </ul>
<b>E9</b>	<b>Support, encourage and facilitate staff through structured professional and career development (Strategic objective 5).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership Development Programmes commissioned and delivered to a target group of multi-disciplinary managers. Established Health and Wellbeing service.</li> </ul>
<b>E10</b>	<b>Develop and embed a code of behaviours at all levels and within all of our policies, plans and procedures (Strategic objective 3).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed Tusla's People Strategy and Tusla's Code of Behaviour.</li> </ul>

<b>E11</b>	<p><b>Reform recruitment and retention policies to ensure that they are responsive to organisational needs (Strategic objective 5).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented an in-house recruitment service and recruitment review and strategic plan commissioned.</li> </ul>
<b>E12</b>	<p><b>Establish an office of legal services to provide/procure good quality legal advice and support, which is cost-effective, consistent and accessible (Strategic objective 2).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dealt with all disclosure requests and Section 20 reports eliminating member fees in respect of same. Dealt with all High Court matters not arising from child care proceedings.</li> </ul>
<b>E13</b>	<p><b>Develop an internal and external communications strategy (Strategic objective 6).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications strategy developed.</li> </ul>
<b>E14</b>	<p><b>Embed a culture of effective communications throughout the organisation, supported by appropriate multi-media and other tools (Strategic objective 6).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Communications Team contributed to a number of initiatives in the Agency in a cost-effective and accessible manner.</li> </ul>
<b>E15</b>	<p><b>Establish a protocol for the branding of estates and all Tusla-associated activities (Strategic objective 6).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A property database was established and a tender document prepared regarding the branding of the estates portfolio.</li> </ul>
<b>E16</b>	<p><b>Conduct regular stakeholder engagement surveys (Strategic objective 6).</b></p>
<b>E17</b>	<p><b>Plan and support a number of key events throughout the year (Strategic objective 6).</b></p>
<b>E18</b>	<p><b>Publish and promote key documents relating to Tusla-led activities (Strategic objective 6).</b></p>
<b>E19</b>	<p><b>Lead a proactive media campaign to assist information dissemination and crisis management (Strategic objective 6).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Agency brand was strengthened through publications, materials, events and messaging.</li> </ul>
<b>E20</b>	<p><b>Develop the capacity to assess needs, plan services strategically, monitor and evaluate outputs and incomes (Strategic objective 2).</b></p>
<b>E21</b>	<p><b>Design and deliver associated training as part of the overall recruitment and retention strategy (Strategic objective 3).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established Workforce Learning and Development under national governance structure. Recruited 10 new training and development posts and delivered 600 courses to 9,000 attendees</li> </ul>
<b>E22</b>	<p><b>Design, develop and launch an annual staff survey in order to strengthen staff engagement and consultative networks (Strategic objective 3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Social Work Survey completed by the Centre for Effective Studies on interventions employed or required by social workers.</li> <li>Online survey completed to identify learning and development needs of staff regarding DSGBV.</li> </ul>

<b>E23</b>	<p><b>Develop professional development plan for social workers in order to foster greater self-regulation, accountability and professional leadership (Strategic objective 5).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP for social workers developed and Project Board for Empowering Practitioners and Practice Initiative established.</li> </ul>
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## Service Areas

The following tables sets out an overview of the service areas relevant to Corporate Output E.

Information and Communications Technology	
<p><b>Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>The purpose of the ICT Team is to develop and implement an ICT strategy for Tusla and provide day-to-day support to maintain and improve ICT services.</p>	<p><b>2016 Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an ICT Strategy for Tusla to include an ICT operating model.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Activities and Targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an ICT strategy for Tusla including framework agreements, baseline audit, options analysis and production of costs, roadmap and implementation plan.</li> <li>Establish an ICT Project Management Office .</li> <li>Centralise ICT specification and technical support for procurement.</li> <li>Develop a service level agreement with HSE ICT to formally state the quantum of service provided by the HSE to Tusla.</li> <li>Strengthen ICT security within Tusla through the procurement of an external partner.</li> </ul>	

Estates	
<p><b>Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>The Estates team is responsible for the development and implementation of a strategy to ensure that the Agency has the necessary capacity to deliver services in optimum surroundings and in locations that are accessible to service users and staff.</p>	<p><b>2016 Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Capital Plan to address key priorities for 2016.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities and Targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The capital allocation of €13.560 million will be used to fund the continuing contracted works at special care centres in Portrane and Lucan, Co. Dublin.</li> <li>Essential refurbishment and upgrade works will be carried out on a priority basis for service centres across the country.</li> <li>Minor capital works will be undertaken to address critical health and safety, fire safety and statutory compliance requirements.</li> <li>Replacement of the vehicle fleet for residential and care services will continue.</li> </ul>	

**Finance**

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Finance Directorate is to support and assist the Agency in operating in the most efficient and effective manner possible and within the allocated funding and is responsible for the following:

- Managing accounting, treasury and financial reporting operations.
- Developing and managing internal controls to mitigate risk as well as reporting on Tusla's financial position.
- Developing best practice approaches and systems to inform resource allocation and value for money.
- Reporting to the DCYA on cash expenditure against profiled funding allocation.

**2016 Priorities**

- Roll out 2016 Budget.
- Establish Tusla Resource Allocation Model.
- Establish Tusla specific Financial Regulations..

**Activities and Targets**

- Develop and agree the budget for 2016.
- Implement the first phase of the Tusla resource allocation model and use to inform the allocation of funding in 2016.
- Produce the 2015 Annual Financial Statement.
- Implement recommendations from the Comptroller and Auditor General and Internal Audit Reports.
- Develop and plan for new payments systems for foster allowances.
- Recruit new staff outlined in new finance operating model.
- Implement enhanced governance arrangements with grant recipients.
- Roll out Tusla specific Financial Regulations.
- Implement further improvements to purchase to pay process.

**Human Resources**

**HR Strategic**

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Strategic HR unit is to ensure there is a strategic approach to the management of human resources, aligned to the organisation's intended future direction.

**2016 Priorities**

- Develop a recruitment strategic plan.
- Implement new organisation model.
- Develop strategic workforce plan.

**Activities and Targets**

- Produce a Recruitment Strategy.
- Develop a methodology for supply forecasting to plan for and address demand.
- Conduct a skills gap audit and develop plan to address gaps.
- Establish a talent management process with third level institutions.

## Workforce Learning and Development

### Statement of Purpose

The Workforce Learning and Development Unit have responsibility for all learning and development activities within Tusla.

### 2016 Priorities

- Develop and implement new strategies and initiatives to develop Tusla as a learning organisation.
- Develop leadership in Tusla

### Activities and Targets

- Implement the Tusla CPD strategy.
- Produce a Learning and Development Strategy.
- Complete and implement Tusla Induction Programme.
- Establish Tusla Third Level Liaison Framework with CES.
- Establish a coaching and mentoring system.
- Establish a Tusla Leadership Development Faculty and deliver leadership development Programmes.

## Employee Wellbeing and Welfare

### Statement of Purpose

The Employee Wellbeing and Welfare unit provides the necessary systems and processes to enable staff to reach and maintain their full potential to deliver a quality service.

### 2016 Priorities

- Establish Employee Assistance Programmes.
- Develop Tusla Retention Strategy.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Establish EAP programmes and implement related policies and guidelines.
- Conduct a review of Health and Safety at Work.
- Advance the implementation Employee and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Develop guidelines for accessing occupational health providers.

## Recruitment and Talent Management

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Recruitment and Talent Management Unit is to provide oversight to recruitment processes. This unit is responsible for all aspects of HR's people strategy; succession planning, workforce planning, attraction and retention, vacancy management including Employment Monitoring approval process.

### 2016 Priorities

- Fully establish Tusla recruit.
- Develop Tusla's Retention Strategy.
- Produce guidance regarding fitness to practice complaints.
- Establish Tusla Garda Clearance Unit.

### Activities and Targets

- Improve the timelines regarding the appointment of staff.
- Expand the role and remit of Tusla Recruit to include all of Tusla's recruitment and talent management needs.
- Produce and commence implementation of Tusla's Retention Strategy.
- Establish standardised operating principles for fitness to practice complaints.
- Establish a Garda Clearance unit and roll out of e-vetting.
- Establish succession management processes.
- Carry out research into resilience and employee engagement.

### Operations – Organisational Management

#### Statement of Purpose

HR Operations supports the following services:

- Organisational management.
- Management information.
- HR policies and procedures.
- Payroll processes.
- Managing Health Business Services HR Shared Services Service Level Agreements.
- Implementation of new legislation and Department Circulars.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Develop and improve the services of the HR Directorate.
- Develop a business warehouse.

#### Activities and Targets

- Develop a business warehouse to enhance management reports and link to Agency integrated performance report.
- Review the time entry structure and develop and implement a streamlined process.
- Review and monitor Service Level Agreement with Health Business Services.
- Review payroll process and implement improvements.

### Employee Relations and Industrial Relations

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Employee Relations and Industrial Relations Unit is to develop employee relations policies and strategies to achieve organisational objectives. It also conducts negotiations with the designated employee representative groups.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Develop Tusla specific policies relating to employee and industrial relations.
- Complete the clerical admin review.

#### Activities and Targets

- Complete Tusla disciplinary policy and procedure
- Complete employee relations policies for the staff handbook.
- Develop and maintain an industrial/employee relations national database.

### Legal Services

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the in-house Legal Services Unit is to provide specialist legal services in the area of child care law and corporate advices. The unit also co-ordinates the work of 31 member firms, Agency staff and the DCYA in order to ensure a consistent and legally compliant approach to cases and the implementation of laws, policies and practices.

#### 2016 Priorities

- Resource in-house legal services in order to reduce legal spend.
- Develop ICT structure for legal services.

### Activities and Targets

- Establish an appropriately resourced in-house legal service to reduce legal spend and recruit required staff to deal with transferred case load from in-house expansion.
- Provide oversight and coordinate member firms in-house.
- Commence of Dublin North East (DNE) legal project and transfer of DNE files from member firm to in-house team.
- Review counsel fees protocol and continue to control nomination of counsel to only when necessary and reduce DNE spend.
- Establish a system to review and analyse performance information regarding legal services.

## Communications

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Communications Unit is to oversee the implementation of the Agency's communications strategy. This involves managing media engagement and ensuring a consistent approach to internal and external communications and branding.

### 2016 Priorities

- Increase public awareness of Tusla's functions and purpose.
- Further develop the press office function
- Establish processes to improve internal communications.
- Produce a branding protocol.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Establish processes to improve internal communications.
- Produce a branding protocol.
- Develop and implement public and staff awareness campaigns regarding key Agency initiatives, in particular PPFs.

## Health and Safety

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Health and Safety unit is to provide support and oversight to the implementation of the health and safety programme in the Agency.

### 2016 Priorities

- Establish health and safety function within the Agency.
- Develop and implement a health and safety programme.

### Service Activities and Targets

- Establish a health and safety function within Tusla with the appropriate resources to match organisational need.
- Conduct a gap analysis regarding the requirements for an effective health and safety programme.
- Implement priority areas from the gap analysis to address any risks identified.

## 9.0 Quality, Performance and Governance

This section outlines the measures that will be put in place in 2016 to monitor performance, drive accountability and improve governance.

### Performance Oversight

Currently there are a number of mechanisms of performance reporting and oversight in place at a national level, these include:

- Quarterly integrated performance report;
- Monthly national performance dashboard;
- Monthly human resource reports;
- Monthly financial reports;
- National governance groups.

Tusla recognises the importance of continually strengthening accountability and good governance. To enhance overall governance and accountability arrangements in 2016 a updated performance framework with additional mechanisms and structures will be put in place. This framework will set out the means by which Tusla senior management will hold services to account for their performance.

There will be a number of sources of information and documents that will form the basis of the performance framework:

- The Tusla Corporate Plan 2015–2017 (incorporating DCYA Performance Framework);
- The Tusla 2016 Business Plan (incorporating 2016 DCYA Performance Statement);
- Operational plans;
- Performance reports (e.g. quarterly reports and performance heat map);
- Quality reviews and audits;
- Risk registers, incident and complaint trends and adherence to Early Warning Protocol;
- External evaluations (e.g. HIQA and OCO).

A National Performance Assurance Group will be established to review and assess the performance of services against the performance framework. This group will have formal delegated authority from the Chief Executive to serve as the key accountability mechanism regarding performance. The National Performance Assurance Group will hold managers (e.g. Area Managers and national service managers), who are responsible for operational delivery, to account for their performance. This process will not replace the performance management role of line managers in operational functions - it will serve to strengthen overall governance and accountability.

The standing membership of the group will be:

- National Director of Human Resources;
- National Director of Quality Assurance;
- National Director of Finance.

The National Performance Assurance Group will meet each service area and national service on a quarterly basis to review their performance against set criteria. The main output from these meetings will be a national performance assurance report for submission to the Chief Executive and the Board. Serious performance issues will be escalated to the Chief Executive via the Chair of the group.

### Tracking the Business Plan in 2016

The delivery of service priorities and actions outlined in the 2016 Business Plan will be tracked, reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis. The template that will be used for tracking and monitoring the 2016 Business Plan is provided in Appendix 1. A report based on progress against the business plan

will be submitted to the Board and the DCYA on a quarterly basis.

### **Strengthening Governance**

Throughout 2015 Tusla undertook a number of initiatives to strengthen governance at all levels in the organisation. As a new organisation Tusla must continue to develop and strengthen governance arrangements. In 2016 Tusla will focus on the strengthening the key components of good governance which will centre on people, processes and practice. Some of the initiatives will include the following:

- Complete the implementation of the new organisational model and structure.
- Increase management and leadership capacity through recruitment of key leadership posts.
- Roll-out resource allocation model to match resources to need-based on available information.
- Strengthen integrated risk management and quality assurance processes throughout the Agency.
- A process for implementing all policies and procedures.
- Establish groups and committees to link up service delivery, quality assurance and practice development to maximise service improvement and risk management.
- A review of recommendations from internal and external reviews and the subsequent service action response.
- Compliance with statutory and other obligations including the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

### **Self-evaluation**

In 2016, the Agency will make further steps to promote and enhance self-evaluation through the introduction of the Agency's Quality Assurance Framework. The purpose of the Framework is to define quality and set out the approach by which all staff can gather, analyse and use information to assess, in a systematic and co-ordinated way, the level of quality of services at any level in the organisation.

The Framework is underpinned and in line with Strategic Objective 8 of the Tusla Corporate Plan 2015-2017:

*"Ensure a strategic approach to quality assurance, information management and risk management that supports continuous improvement and good governance."*

In particular Action 1 under Strategic Objective 8:

*"Develop a strategic approach to quality assurance that supports continuous improvement and positions Tusla as a self evaluating organisation that meets its regulatory compliance requirements."*

A key objective of this framework is to position the Agency as a self-evaluating and self-aware organisation that knows and understands where its strengths and weakness are, with a clear path towards quality excellence. The focus, first and foremost, will be about improving services and providing a language to explain what quality means and how it can be measured. Consistent high quality services should be experienced by all service users, regardless of location.

Implementation of the Framework will ensure that the Agency is not reliant on external regulatory and inspection activity to provide assurance that its services are safe and being delivered to a high standard. The Agency must, to have confidence that improvements are occurring, have its own framework in place to provide this critically important monitoring and assessment function.

The Framework comprises three components as follows:

- Defining Quality;

- Assessing Quality;
- Improving Quality.

**Defining Quality**

Three quality principles have been identified to characterise high quality services provided by Tusla. These principles described in Table 9.1.

Quality Principles
<p><b>Person-Centred</b> The rights and views of children and families are respected and taken into consideration when planning, delivering and improving services.</p>
<p><b>Well-Led</b> There are governance, leadership and management systems in place that support staff to ensure the delivery of consistent and accountable services for children and families.</p>
<p><b>Safe</b> Services are resourced, designed and developed to achieve the best and safest outcomes for children and families.</p>

Table 9.1: Tusla Quality Principles

Each of the quality principles is underpinned by supporting criteria providing the foundations of a high quality and safe service (Figure 9.1, page 80).

**Self-assessment**

Self-assessment as defined for Tusla involves services assessing themselves against the supporting criteria specified for each of the three quality principles identified. The underpinning rationale for self-assessment is that services should not have to rely on external scrutiny or inspection to determine that a safe high quality service is being delivered or to identify improvements which may be required. These processes should be in place as a core feature of any high performing organisation.

Self-assessment will provide:

- A review of all aspects of service operations.
- An opportunity to engage service users, staff and other stakeholders.
- A comprehensive picture of quality and safety.
- The overarching direction and co-ordination on quality and safety for services.
- An opportunity to identify and celebrate key strengths.

To assist services in conducting self-assessment, a self-assessment tool has been developed and contains examples of evidence or guiding prompts. This will facilitate determining the extent to which the criteria are in place.

**Improving Quality**

Assessment by itself is of little benefit; therefore a clear process for continuous quality improvement needs to be in place. The key output of any assessment should be the development of a quality improvement plan (QIP). The QIP shall address areas for improvement and shortfalls but also build on the strengths identified in the evidence provided as part of the self-evaluation.



Table 9.1 : Quality principles and descriptors identified for Tusla

### Next Steps in 2016

A number of steps will be undertaken in 2016 to support the implementation of the framework, these include:

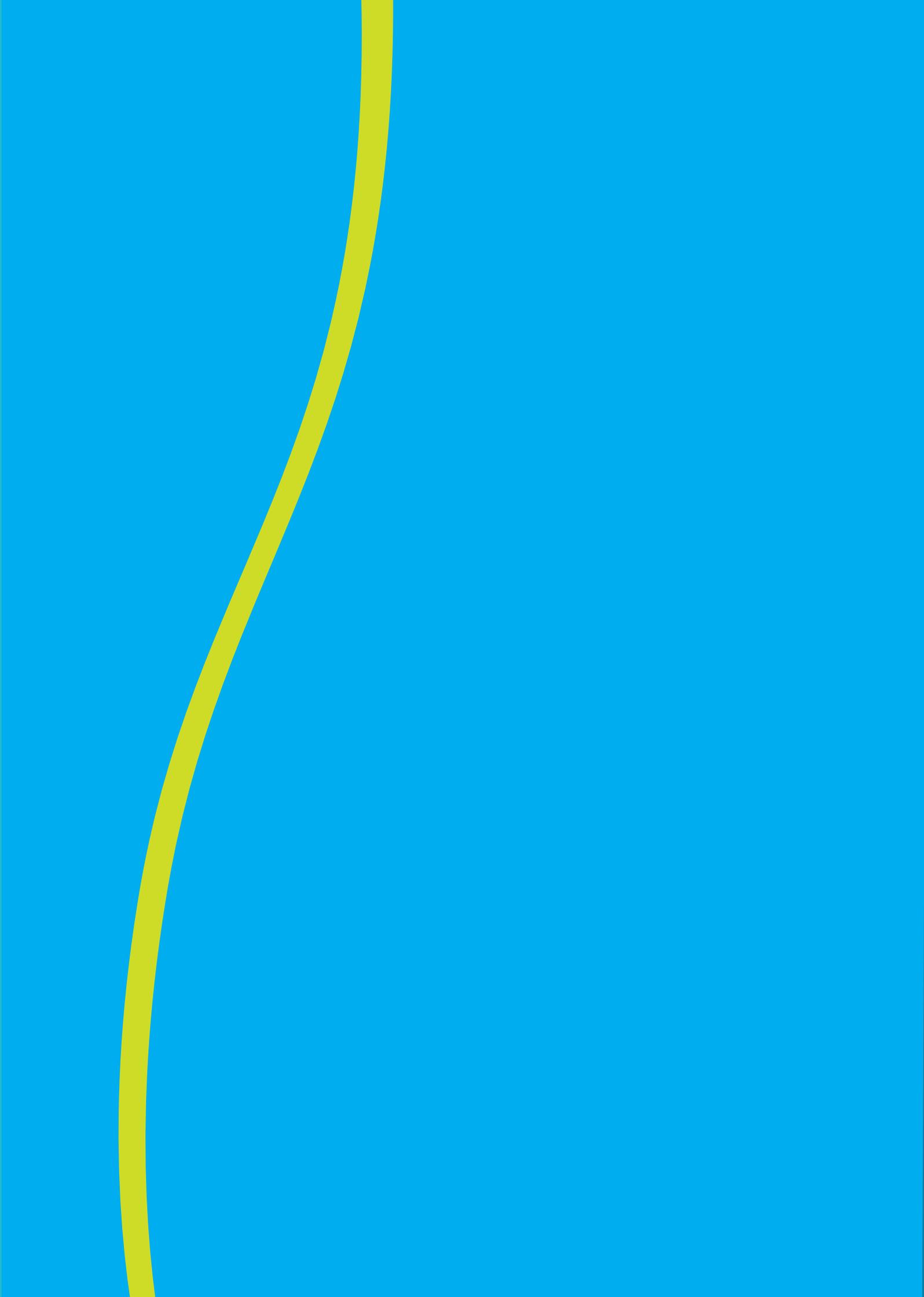
- Completing engagement and consultation with staff and stakeholders regarding the content and processes underpinning the framework.
- Conduct a pilot in selected service Areas to further refine the framework.
- Full roll-out of the framework; including training for staff and establishing other supportive mechanisms.
- Completing a full self-assessment cycle against the framework in all service areas.

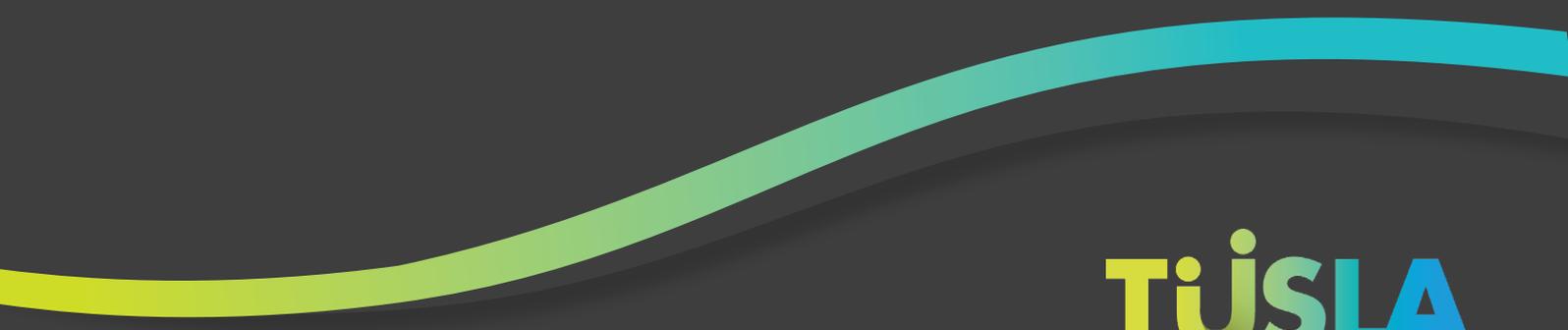


## Appendix 1 - Sample Business Plan Progress Tracker

**OUTPUT A:**  
Tusla's child protection processes and systems are responding to children at risk in a timely manner.

	Service Area	Priorities	Actions	Performance Targets/ Metrics	Due	Quarterly Update
A1 OPs	Child Protection and Welfare	Ensure an approach to responding to referrals which consistently provides an efficient, effective and proportionate response.				
A2 OPs		Targeted national reduction of cases awaiting allocation by 60%.				
A3 OPs	Foster Care Services	Increase number of approved statutory foster carers.				
A4 OPs		Improve the percentage of general foster carers with an allocated link worker and other support arrangements.				
A5 OPs		Ensure 100% of children in care have an allocated social worker.				





**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency