



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Launch of Child and Family Agency offers a fresh start in child services

Thursday, 30 January 2014

The official launch of the Child and Family Agency today (30/1/14) offers a fresh start in the delivery of services for children and families in Ireland. The new State agency dedicated to improving wellbeing and outcomes for every child, was launched by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny T.D., and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald T.D., at an event hosted by Agency chairperson, Norah Gibbons, in Dublin Castle.

Chief Executive, Gordon Jeyes, delivered a presentation and set out his ambitions for the Child and Family Agency:

“This Agency is an exciting fresh start, putting Children First Always: planning for individuals, joining up services. One Child. One Plan. Many Perspectives

“The Child and Family Agency will be a ferocious corporate parent, demanding for the children of Ireland the very best that the State can give.

“This will be an agency that has the agility and the freedom and flexibility to engage with individual families on a practical level and the capacity to react to changing circumstances.

“This Agency will tell it as it is.”

On the 1st of January 2014 the Child and Family Agency became an independent legal entity, comprising the former HSE Children & Family Services, the Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board and a number of other child services. It represents the most comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland. It brings together for the first time, social workers and staff in community based services, education welfare and social care to work in partnership with voluntary and State agencies.

Norah Gibbons, Chairperson of the Agency, said: **“The establishment of the Child and Family Agency is a historic development; we begin to draw together in a phased and planned way services for children and young people and we begin to eliminate the fragmentation of services**

so often a feature of our past. The Task Force that drew up the blueprint for the Child and Family Agency reported to the Minister in July 2012 and described the opportunity that the creation of the new Agency provided as ‘A once in a generation opportunity to fundamentally reform children's services in Ireland’.”

Mr Jeyes unveiled the new Child and Family Agency website, www.tusla.ie, and a Statement of Purpose, which will inform the Agency’s first three year plan. The Agency’s business plan for 2014 will be submitted to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs next month. It will set out a range of outputs to be achieved during 2014, as well as predicted service levels in order to map the Agency’s progress in key areas such as accountability, partnership and workforce development.

-ENDS-

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Notes:

- Gordon Jeyes is available for interview. Contact Sharon Waters on 085 1332502
- The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013. Under the Act the Agency is charged with:
 - Supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children and the effective functioning of families;
 - Offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed to deliver these supports to children and families, and provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families;
 - Responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children’s attendance, participation and retention in education;
 - Ensuring that the best interests of the child guides all decisions affecting individual children;
 - Consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency’s policies and services;
 - Strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services that are responsive to needs;
 - Undertaking research relating to its functions; and
 - Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services.
- The Child and Family Agency’s services include a range of universal and targeted services:
 - Child protection and welfare services;
 - Educational welfare services;
 - Psychological services;
 - Alternative care;
 - Family and locally-based community supports;
 - Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.