

Press Release; Issued on Behalf of the Newly Established Children and Family Agency

Wednesday 1st January 2014

Board and Chief Executive of New Child and Family Agency appointed

Today (Wednesday, 1st January 2014) the Board and Chief Executive of the new Child and Family Agency were appointed by Minister Frances Fitzgerald. The Agency will be chaired by Ms Norah Gibbons. Mr Gordon Jeyes, former National Director, HSE, for Children and Families Services was appointed as Chief Executive.

The new Chief Executive says: "I look forward to working with colleagues both within the Agency and in partner agencies to deliver a service which is accountable, consistent and transparent. Our aspiration is to be a service which espouses values such as justice and courage. But aspiration is not enough and we look forward to being judged on behaviour reflecting those values. Putting Children First Always."

Key to the Agency's work plan will be an emphasis on partnership and interagency working. This is welcomed by significant partners delivering key services to children and their families throughout Ireland, including Barnardos, Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services and EPIC – Empowering Young People in Care, ISPCC.

The newly established Child and Family Agency (the Agency) will assume service responsibility for the following range of services.

- Child Welfare and Protection Services, including family support services;
- Existing Family Support Agency responsibilities;
- Existing National Educational Welfare Board responsibilities;
- Pre-school Inspection Services;
- Domestic, sexual and gender based violence services;
- Services related to the psychological welfare of children.

The establishment of the Agency is one of the largest and most ambitious public sector reforms being undertaken by this Government. It will involve the bringing together of over 4,000 staff and a budget of over €600 million from three existing bodies – HSE Children and Families Services, Family Support Agency and National Educational Welfare Board.

Barnardos:

This is a vital way to start 2014. The last few years have involved a huge amount of work in child welfare and protection services in Ireland. A lot of people have worked tirelessly to make those services better for the children they serve. There's new management now, and a dedicated sense of purpose. We still have a way to go but there is much to be hopeful for in 2014."

Fergus Finlay, Director

Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services:

Provision of good quality early years services is an important part of our work. Within our Early Childhood Development Centres we work with public health nurses, speech and language services etc to engage with children in the most direct way possible. A new agency putting childrens' needs first will, we hope, reduce traditional obstacles to services"

Liam O Dalaigh, Director

EPIC – Empowering People In Care

EPIC welcomes a new era in services to vulnerable children, with a child centred approach and a focus on children's best interests and on listening to their views and concerns. EPIC looks forward to continuing and strengthening our partnership with as we work together to bring about better outcomes for children in care."

Jennifer Gargan, Director

ISPCC

The ISPCC welcomes the launch of the new Child and Family Agency and sincerely hopes that it will prove to be another vital step in ensuring a higher quality of service provision, a greater level of inter-agency cooperation and coordination, and ultimately a safer environment for children to grow up".

Ashley Balbirnie Chief Executive

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

Biographical Notes**Gordon Jeyes Chief Executive**

Mr.GordonJeyes was the UK's first Director of Children's Services and provided advice to governments in Scotlandand at Westminster on the development of Children's Services.

In addition to his duties, Mr. Jeyes was Chair of the Anti-Bullying Network and a member of the SEED Review Group on Youth Crime. He was a member of the Ministerial Strategy Group on Continuing Professional Development (Teachers) and the National Youth Justice Strategy Steering Group. He led the critical incident response to the Dunblane school massacre in 1996.

MrJeyes was National Director, HSE Children and Families Service.

Gordon Jeyes was awarded an OBE for services to Children in 2011.

Ms. Norah Gibbons – Chairperson

Worked for many years in social work in both the statutory and voluntary sector in the UK and Ireland. Director of Advocacy of Barnardos from 2005 to 2012. Member of the Commission to Inquire into Child abuse 2000-2009. Chaired the Confidential Committee of the Commission from 2000 to 2005, and the Roscommon Child Abuse Inquiry in 2009. Co-chaired the Independent Child Death Review Group with Dr Geoffrey Shannon from 2011 to 2012. Currently a member of Acknowledge Forum of Historical Abuse Inquiry in Northern Ireland. Formerly the Chairperson of the board of Action Alcohol Ireland and was a member of the Taskforce on the Establishment of the Child and Family Agency

Mr. PJ Fitzpatrick

PJ is a Partner with Praesta Ltd, Ireland's leading provider of executive business coaching and mentoring services. He is a non executive director of the Family Support Agency and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service and a former non executive director of the Irish National Stud Company, the Commission for Victims of Crime and the Health Service Executive. He was the first Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Courts Service from 1999 until the end of 2008 where he successfully managed its establishment as a new, independent, statutory agency and led and implemented a major programme of change and modernisation, which transformed courts and courts administration nationwide.

Prior to joining the Courts Service he was Chief Executive of the Eastern Regional Health Board, then the largest health authority in Ireland. He previously held a number of senior management positions in 3 other health boards in Ireland.

He was the Independent Chair of the Implementation Body for the Public Service Pay and Modernisation (Croke Park) Agreement 2010 – 2013 and from January until April 2010 was Interim Financial Services Ombudsman. He was the Irish representative on a Council of Europe committee on the independence of the judiciary in 2009

He holds an MSc in Management from Trinity College Dublin, a Certificate in Coaching from Henley College/Reading University and is a member of the Institute of Directors Ireland.

Ms. Gary Joyce

Managing Partner of Genesis, a leading Irish management consultancy that specialises in strategy and brand-led change. Prior to co-founding Genesis, she was a founding partner of Dimension, Ireland's first integrated marketing communications company. Former Chairperson of ACC Bank and currently a member of the Governing Authority of Dublin City University. Member of the board of Dublin Bus and a number of private and not-for-profit organisations. Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants and Advisors and the Marketing Institute of Ireland.

Mr. Noel Kelly

Manager of the Preparing for Life programme delivered by Northside Partnership. Preparing for Life is an evidence based early intervention programme funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropy. Very considerable previous experience as a primary school teacher and a Home School Community Liaison Coordinator. Previously, co-ordinator of an early school leavers initiative; and education co-ordinator for the Northside Partnership

Ms. Sylva Langford

Former Director General of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in the Department of Health and Children. Prior to this, she was an Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Justice and Law Reform. She has had extensive experience in policy and legislative work across a broad range of government areas and has a professional background in social policy and social work. Chair of the Citizens Information Board, Adjunct Professor at the School of Applied Social Sciences UCD College of Human Sciences. and was a member of Task Force on the Establishment of the Child and Family Agency.

Ms. ItaMangan

A barrister with considerable experience in public policy. Chair of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare. Legal and Social Affairs consultant in both the voluntary and statutory fields. She has extensive experience in governance and policy gained through membership of a number of Boards and Committees, including in particular, the Residential Institutions Redress Review Committee and the Commission of Investigation into clerical abuse in Dublin Archdiocese and Diocese of Cloyne.

Mr. Rory O’Ferrall

Partner and Head of Corporate Recovery, Deloitte & Touche up to 2008; Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and Fellow of the Association of Business Recovery Professionals. Public Interest Director Irish Nationwide Building Society, 2009 – 2011; Director Quinn Group (ROI) Limited April 2011 – July 2012; Director Quinn International Property Management Ltd and a number of companies within the 'Property' Group April 2011 – present. Former President of the National Youth Council. Considerable expertise in strategy, forward planning, change management and reorganisations.

Dr. Noelle Spring

Development Director with the Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF). Prior to working with KHF, she worked as a Project Officer with the Combat Poverty Agency and a Community Worker and Social Worker with the HSE (formerly the Eastern Health Board). This latter role included working with the St. Helena's Community and Family Resource Centre in Finglas South. A graduate of Social Work from Trinity College Dublin, she was conferred in 2011 with a Doctorate in Education by St. Patrick's

College of Education in Dublin. Her doctoral thesis focused on absenteeism at Primary School Level in an area designated as disadvantaged.

Gary Ó Donnchadha

Gary Ó Donnchadha is Deputy Chief Inspector in the Department of Education and Skills. His responsibilities include overseeing the development and implementation of the Inspectorate's annual inspection programme and supporting the Inspectorate's advisory and policy work. Gary has been with the Inspectorate since 1998. An important focus of his work in recent years has been supporting the reform and redevelopment of inspection models for both primary and post-primary schools and working with the Inspectorate's senior management group on strategic developments in quality assurance. Gary served as Ireland's representative on the Board of Governors of the European Schools from 2007 to 2012. Before joining the Inspectorate Gary was a primary teacher, part-time lecturer with UCC and served as an education officer with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)