



Closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday 11th September 2026**

Expressions of interest are sought for a
Social Worker (Assistant Principal or equivalent) for secondment to the
Department of Children, Disability, and Equality
(Child Protection Operations and Performance Unit)

The secondment will be for a 2-year period initially, with a possible extension of 1 year.

Introduction

The Department of Children, Disability, and Equality's (DCDE) mission is to fund and deliver services supported by policy and legislation that realise people's rights, promote equality, celebrate diversity and that maximise opportunity to participate in society, particularly by children, disabled people and those experiencing inequalities.

Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division is responsible for policy, legislative developments, operational standards and performance relating to child welfare and protection, alternative care and children's rights. It has responsibility for Departmental governance oversight and development of Tusla, The Child and Family Agency and Oberstown Children's Detention Centre. The Division also has responsibility for parenting support, prevention and early intervention initiatives, interagency working and leading on cross-cutting innovations to support outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

Child Protection Operations and Performance Unit (CPOPU) provides oversight and strategic leadership on Tusla's child protection and welfare operations, ensuring high professional standards and effective responses to emerging issues affecting vulnerable children. CPOPU supports the Minister through expert analysis of operational performance, inspection findings and individual case issues, and coordinates specialist social work advice to inform policy, legislation and cross-government initiatives. The Unit also leads on national and multi-agency programmes such as Barnahus, the post COVID-19 wellbeing project, manages engagement with HIQA and other partners, and works collaboratively across the Department and wider government to address service gaps, improve outcomes for children, and advance innovations in child protection and care.

A key part of how CPOPU provides these supports it through the secondment of a Social Work Specialist from Tusla. The Department is looking to second a PSW to support the unit in the provision of Social Work expertise.



Duties & Responsibilities:

- Management of unit staff at HEO/AO and EO level (or equivalent grades).
- Review of inspection summary reports (including HIQA and ACIMS) and analysis of key themes.
- Support the Principal Officer and Assistant Secretary in leading the implementation and development of Barnahus in Ireland.
- Preparation of urgent leader's questions for immediate deadlines.
- Summary of important publications for ministerial review and PO approval.
- Working with key stakeholders such as Tusla and HIQA in the development of new standards and policies.
- Review and input into proposed legislative changes
- Provision of social work advice for other units/divisions on policy, legislation and other matters
- Support for the unit, division and wider Department on ad hoc matters requiring social work expertise.

Essential Requirements:

- Significant child protection experience.
- Social work management experience.
- Leadership abilities in staff management and leading with a specialism.
- Proven track record in stakeholder management.
- Experience of using interpersonal skills to build and maintain working relationships within and outside of organisation.
- Significant report writing and analytical skills.
- Awareness of legislation and international conventions such as UNCRC.
- Experience of working with marginalised groups in society and issues and challenges of same.
- Familiarity with inspection reports, findings and implementation of recommendations.
- Ability to work to urgent deadlines.
- Experience of representing an organisation on high level working group or similar.
- Experience of policy development.

Eligibility

Qualified candidates must, on **11th September 2026**.

- Have a professional social work qualification and registration with CORU.
- 3 – 5 years minimum post social work qualification.
- Be already serving in the civil/public service as a Social Worker (AP or equivalent);
- Have satisfactorily completed probation in their current grade.
- Have obtained a rating of “satisfactory” in their 2025 Performance Review.
- Be suitable from the point of view of health, with particular reference to the relevant sick leave circular/policies.



- Possess the necessary experience, skills and competencies required to perform the role.

The successful candidate will retain the terms and conditions of their existing grade. It will be necessary to certify that the candidate has worked well in his or her present post, has been satisfactory in general conduct and in respect of sick leave prior to the candidate being offered a position.

Conditions of Assignment

- The role is full-time and will be for a period of 2 years initially, with a possible extension of 1 year;
- The secondment arrangement will be reviewed after three months to ensure that it is meeting the expectations of both parties;
- In the event of an officer's service not being satisfactory the secondment arrangement will cease, and the officer will return to his or her parent Department/organisation;
- While on secondment an officer will continue to have access to promotion opportunities in his/her parent organisation;
- While on secondment an officer will not be eligible to compete in internal promotion competitions which are restricted to staff of the DCDE;
- At the end of the period of secondment, the officer will return to Tusla, in accordance with the redeployment arrangements applying at that time.

Application Process

Applicants should submit a CV including a cover letter, highlighting relevant experience and setting out their reasons for considering themselves suitable for the role, and a determination of releasability form by email to HR Unit, DCDE at recruitment@equality.gov.ie by close of business on **11th September 2026**. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Selection Process

When the closing date has passed, the Department will undertake a selection process. This may include an initial shortlisting of applications to ascertain the applicants who best meet the requirements of the advertised position. Applicant(s) may then be invited to a meeting to discuss and explore their skills and potential to meet the requirements of the advertised position.

Location

This post is based in Miesian Plaza, Baggot St., Dublin 2. Hybrid working is available, in line with the Department's blended working policy.



DETERMINATION OF RELEASABILITY

To be completed by HR Manager or their nominated HR Official:

Consideration has been given by the People Manager and HR Manager on the release of the following staff member:

Name		Grade	
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Important Note: It has been agreed by the Public Service Leadership Board that parent organisations will continue to pay participants from their sectoral envelope for the two-year secondment period. Parent organisations will not be able to recoup from DPER for the two-year placement.

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Staff Member is considered releasable at this time:

Please select

Brief Outline of the Underlying Principle for the Decision

Local HR : Name and Grade	Date

A copy of this completed report should be forwarded to the Staff Member.

The report and all related records should be maintained in a confidential and secure manner for data protection purposes.