



Area Based Therapy Team

Professionals committed
to supporting children
and young people in care



Dedicated Support

Support key figures in the young person's life.

Work with the child on their therapy plan.

Professional Advice

Advocate and advise around appropriate therapy services.

Provide guidance and support to caregivers.

Contents

What is the IFTS	04
ABTT Learning Sites	05
ABTT SOP	06
How We Help You	07
The Professional Network	09
Key Messages	10

What is the Integrated Framework for Therapeutic Services?

Tusla's reform programme includes three pillars, Structure, Culture and Practice. The Integrated Framework for Therapeutic Services (IFTS) project is a component of the practice pillar.

The IFTS aims to create a comprehensive framework for delivering consistent, integrated, and high-quality therapeutic services. This project oversees various Tusla services, including the **Assessment Consultation and Therapy Service (ACTS)** for children in Special Care, detention, and at risk of those placements, **National Interagency Prevention Programme (NIAPP)** for children with harmful sexual behaviour, Marte Meo implementation, and **Area Based Therapy Teams (ABTT)**.

In 2023, the IFTS set up a pilot ABTT in each Tusla Region to provide localised multidisciplinary support to children in care.

ABTT Learning Sites

Louth/Meath

Midlands

Mid-West

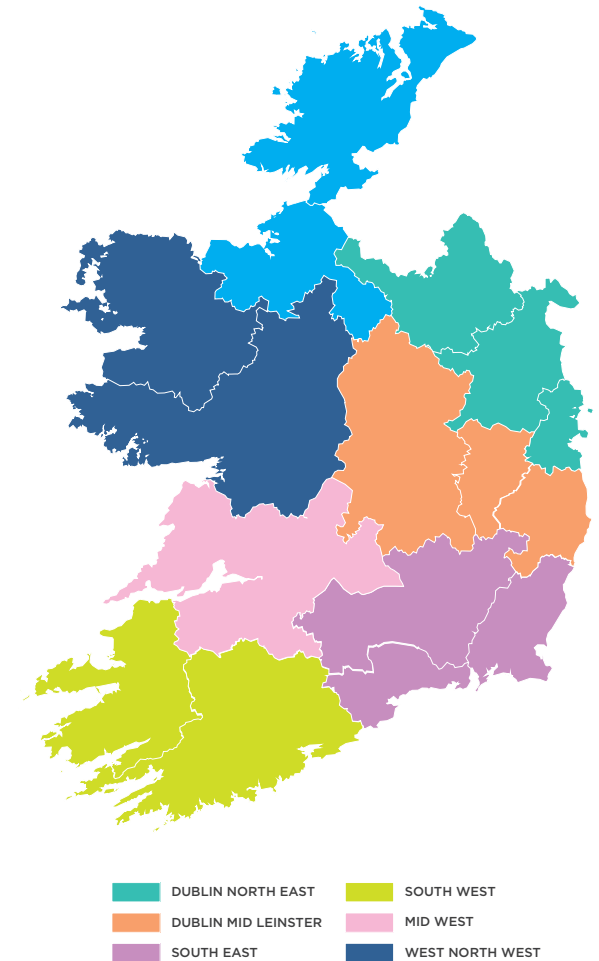
Cork

Galway/Roscommon

Carlow/Kilkenny
/South Tipperary

Each team consists of a senior speech & language therapist, a senior occupational therapist, and administrative support, in six pilot sites across the Tusla regions. Some teams may also have a psychologist.

The goal of the ABTT is to provide multi-disciplinary input into care planning from the point of admission to care.



ABTT SOP



Notification



Understanding
Therapeutic Need



Pathways and
Intervention



Close

How We Work

When a child enters care through a voluntary agreement or court order, the Area Based Therapy Team is notified. Priority is given to newly admitted children in care (CIC) and long-term cases are also considered.

The IFTS aims to create a comprehensive framework for the Area Based Therapy Team (ABTT), with the child's social worker and support network, identifies the child's therapeutic needs.

The ABTT provide multidisciplinary input into care planning by managing risks and building resilience, addressing communication needs, and encouraging engagement in meaningful activities.

The ABTT collaborates with parents, carers, and educators to devise strategies for tackling challenges at home and school, with the goal of supporting the young person's well-being, mental health, to achieve goals that are important to them.

The ABTT does not replace the statutory functions of other agencies (e.g. Health Service Executive (HSE) or National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)). Referral pathways to these services should be followed based on the identified needs of the child.

How We Help You

There are different ways we can help you:



Advocate and advise around appropriate therapy services. (e.g. HSE, NEPS etc.)



This Team does not replace other therapeutic services involved with the child. (e.g. HSE and NEPS)



Information, guidance and support to caregivers.



A therapy plan will be developed together with the important adults in the child's life.



Helping children reach their full potential by supporting the important people in their lives.



Foster carers, birth parents and children in care can be key players in the development of the therapy plan.



Working with the child on their therapy care plan.



The supports offered will be guided by the child's needs.

The Area Based Therapy Teams (ABTT) use a systemic, early intervention approach to address developmental trauma and attachment needs.

Systemic working involves collaborating with the child, their network and other services to identify therapeutic needs. We prioritise support for key figures like foster carers and provide them with guidance to better understand and support the child.

The ABTT will contribute to the child's statutory care plan and may develop an Therapeutic Plan (TP). Updates are provided to the court by the child's social worker.

Our approach involves four pathways: referral to other therapy services, information and education, intervention and support through carers and professionals, and direct assessment and intervention with the child. Children may be in receipt of one or more of these pathways at any one time.

In addition, ABTT members are trained in Adaptive Mentalization Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT). This framework is specifically designed to support teams in developing systems around the client, their network, the workers, and ongoing learning at work. AMBIT helps manage the potentially large volume of people involved with the young person and addresses the complexities of the cases we work with. A key goal of AMBIT is to improve young people's relationship to help, enhancing the likelihood of more adaptive help-seeking in the future. By addressing current symptoms and prioritising prevention, the AMBIT method of working aligns with our commitment to comprehensive, early intervention.



The Professional Network

Our approach emphasises collaborative work with the child, their families, carers, and professionals to establish therapeutic goals. We focus on understanding the whole child and their context rather than solely on diagnosis.

Acknowledging the profound impact of developmental and relational trauma, we recognise the challenges within the care system and aim to ease the burden on children by identifying trusted individuals in their network. We provide support to these individuals to enhance the child's care journey and foster security and trust.

Therapeutic assessments or interventions should only proceed after consulting and collaborating with those involved in the child's care. This ensures a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs and promotes collective decision making in their care. Collaboration involves gathering diverse perspectives and knowledge, ensuring carefully considered therapeutic goals informed by various disciplines. The child's voice is considered at every stage of their therapeutic planning.

Key Messages

- 01 | **ABTT collaborates with social workers, professionals, the child, and their family to understand their therapeutic needs for statutory care planning.**
- 02 | **The focus is on enhancing well-being through effective therapeutic services. ABTT includes speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, business support and some teams have psychologists.**
- 03 | **ABTT employs an early intervention approach, emphasising strengths and using a systemic and collaborative model to understand the child's development taking into consideration their circumstances.**
- 04 | **Children receive service based on need under a continuum of care.**
- 05 | **Assessment or intervention is undertaken with careful consideration by ABTT, in collaboration with the social work team.**
- 06 | **Social workers join with the ABTT and represent its views in Child Care proceedings.**
- 07 | **ABTT does not replace other agencies' statutory functions, and existing referral pathways should be followed based on need.**

Contact us:

Louth / Meath

LHMH.ABTT@tusla.ie

Midlands

Midlands.ABTT@tusla.ie

Mid West

MidWest.ABTT@tusla.ie

Cork

Cork.ABTT@tusla.ie

Galway/Roscommon

GYRN.ABTT@tusla.ie

Carlow Kilkenny/South Tipperary

CWKKST.ABTT@tusla.ie