

**Ref:** CMT-AD-41-2020

**Date:** 22/04/2020

**Version:** 1.0

**Approved by Tusla Crisis Management Team – COVID-19**

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## **Position paper regarding physical intervention training for new staff in Children’s Residential Services (CRS)**

### **1.0 Introduction**

A previous position paper (Ref: CMT-AD-36-2020) was submitted to the Crisis Management Team (CMT) on 11/04/2020 regarding the provision of refresher physical intervention training for CRS staff. It was subsequently approved by the CMT.

This paper relates to the requirement to provide the full programme of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training to new staff (didactic and physical skills) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges this poses and recommendations for the CMT to consider.

The provision of physical intervention training is mandatory within CRS. It is generally more applicable to but not exclusive to special care centres, as there are a number of mainstream services that utilise physical interventions from time to time.

### **2.0 Challenges**

Due to the requirements to engage in physical distancing measures in accordance with the government and public health guidance, there is an inherent need to amend the manner in which the TCI programme, including physical intervention, is delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.0 Requirements for training**

The TCI training programme comprises of a blend of face to face didactic material and physical skills training. This takes place over a five-day period.

CRS is seeking a significant deviation from the current established programme for delivering the TCI programme in full. This is solely due to the challenges associated with the requirements for physical distancing coupled with the need for staff to have completed this mandatory training.

#### **4.0 Identification of risks**

There are significant risks associated with providing the current full TCI programme. Equally, there are inherent risks associated with not providing new staff with mandatory physical intervention training.

If the TCI programme were to be delivered in its usual format, it could result in staff and/or trainers in attendance being exposed to the COVID-19 virus, due to their inability to practice social distancing during the physical skills element of the programme. This could potentially expose the Agency to litigation due to a breach of our duty of care to keep staff safe.

Another consideration is to not provide any physical intervention training to these staff. However, this would be a high risk strategy and would present an unacceptable risk to the Agency.

#### **5.0 Proposal to the CMT**

While the following proposal for consideration is not without risk, it is deemed the most low risk option at this time. However, as the situation progresses, this decision can be reviewed and amended as required.

Tusla Workforce Learning and Development will provide an abridged version of the didactic elements of the TCI programme over a two-and-a-half-day period. This will be provided via WebEx with full trainer support and interaction.

Where physical skills training is required, this will be taught by CRS TCI trainers. The use of PPE would be required to mitigate risks associated with the inability to engage in physical distancing.

Staff who complete the abridged version of TCI would receive a limited certification to reflect not having completed the course in full.

#### **6.0 Post COVID-19 Plan**

The staff that received the abridged version of the TCI programme would complete the course in full including all the physical techniques and receive certification to that effect.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

It is recommended that a derogation to allow new staff members to partake in the more limited form of the established TCI training programme described above be put forward for CMT approval.