

Summary Report – Research Ethics

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Title of research study: Is Tusla, Child and Family Agency meeting its UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 Obligations in respect of the Child in Care Reviews that it operates? A Case Study

Abstract: This study explored children and young people's participation and involvement in the decisions made at their Child in Care Reviews. The provisions made by international and domestic legislation, policies and guidelines as to children's participation and what children may expect when in State care were outlined. A lack of consistency as to the provisions and terms of the Foster Care Standards, Residential Care Standards and Tusla guideline lead to different interpretations by professionals which can create variability. Numeric data from one Tusla office during 2017 were recorded: 1) the number of reviews undertaken 2) the number of reviews undertaken within the statutory guidelines 3) the number of children attending their reviews 4) the number of children not attending their reviews 5) the number of children not attending their reviews who submitted a Review Form. The study found that of the 265 Child in Care Reviews undertaken within the study cohort: 24% were not operated within the statutory guidelines; 73% of children did not attend their Review; and 75% of children within the case study did not have any input into their care planning. The study discussed the lack of information accompanying Tusla-published data and information. Variances in how review data is reported within the organisation means that it is not known how many Child in Care Reviews are operated nationally, whether they are operated within the statutory guidelines and the nature and extent of children's participation in their reviews. The study discussed how numeric data and statistical control methods can provide a qualitative overview in terms of setting standards and monitoring performance against them; where quality can be managed; and staff supported to understand targets and to take any corrective actions, suggest improvements and to learn from one another within a learning and effective team environment.

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