

# TUSLA

An Gníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## Tusla Data Management and Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-2026

### Vision

*"To enhance the management and benefits of data across Tusla in a secure, holistic and consistent manner."*

and to

*"To advance a Digital Transformation delivering integrated systems and services that maximise the use of innovation in supporting all Tusla services"*

## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	1
2.	Digital and Data Infrastructure.....	4
3.	Data and Digital Governance .....	7
4.	Records Management .....	11
5.	Data Quality Management.....	16
6.	Analytics and Business Intelligence.....	19
7.	Emerging Technologies .....	22
8.	Emerging Legislation and Policy .....	24
9.	Increased Capability .....	25

# 1. Introduction

## Vision Statement

*“To enhance the **management and benefits of data** across Tusla in a secure, holistic and consistent manner.”*

*“To advance a **Digital Transformation** delivering integrated systems and services that maximise the use of innovation in supporting all Tusla services.”*

## About this Strategy

This strategy builds on the progress delivered under Tusla’s previous Data Management and ICT Strategies from 2018-2023. The new strategy continues the aim to maximise the benefits of **data management and digital innovation in supporting the work of Tusla**. It is informed by the Irish **Public Service Data Strategy; Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland’s Public Service**; other related policy and legislation as well guidance published by relevant Irish authorities such as the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Data Protection Commission, National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OGCIO). The strategy is also informed by best-practice exemplars in Ireland and internationally, as well as relevant standards and bodies of knowledge.



Fig. Some of the related policy, standards and guidance that informs this strategy.

This strategy is anchored by **Tusla’s Vision, Mission, Values, Behaviours** as well as the Agency’s **Reform Programme**. It will seek to maximise data management and digital innovation to support Tusla and our partners in the delivery of services to children, young people, families, and communities. Tusla’s values underpin the strategy by progressing a culture that promotes a recognition amongst all staff of the benefits of good data management and their responsibility to ensure the quality and privacy of the data they process in the course of their duties. **Trust is established as one of the core values of Tusla and with it the privacy of data we hold is of utmost importance to the Agency. Data privacy is accordingly continued as a key focus of this strategy with all actions underpinned by**



a focus on ensuring that the data Tusla holds is managed with respect and in line with the principles of data protection.

## Background

The strategy recognises the **historical low level of data and ICT maturity from which Tusla commenced**. Tusla was established in 2014 with a challenging remit to bring 19 unique and separate services (primarily previously delivered by the HSE) and over 4,000 staff under one Agency. This diverse range of services included Child Protection and Welfare, Adoption and Tracing, Regulation of Early Years Services, Education and Welfare Services, Fostering, Aftercare and Residential Services. Effectively, pre-2014, all 19 services operated paper-based systems or, at best used limited legacy ICT systems that were not fit for purpose.



To enhance Tusla's Data, Digital and ICT environment, the Agency established a dedicated ICT Directorate in 2018 that delivered the first ICT and Data Management Strategies from 2018 to 2023. A report on the progress made over these years is contained in an auxiliary document to this strategy as a progress report that charts the incremental improvements delivered year on year over the past five years.

This new **strategy 2024 to 2026 seeks to build on this progress** and continues the aim to maximise the benefits of **data management and digital innovation in supporting the work of Tusla in delivering services for children, young people, and families**.

## Principles underpinning Data Management and Digital Transformation in Tusla

This strategy is **underpinned by Tusla's corporate Vision, Mission and Values** and is developed based on the following set of guiding principles that continue to establish a shared vision for the development, promotion, and adoption of excellence in Data Management and Digital Innovation across the Agency.



### Data as an Enabler

Data is recognised as a key enabler in the delivery of Tusla's services in supporting children, young people, families and communities



### Data Privacy

Privacy by design and privacy by default are inherent in all data processing and all supporting systems



### Digital First, Digital By Default

Integrated secure digital systems will support all Tusla services and underpin all operational processes



### Transparency

People know what data is held by Tusla, how it is used and how to access their personal data as appropriate



### Data Reuse

Data that is already held in a system and appropriate for reuse is not requested again from staff, service users, partners or others



### Compliance

Data management in Tusla is anchored in supporting compliance with legal, regulatory and policy obligations as well as best practice standards

Fig. Principles underpinning Data Management and Digital Transformation in Tusla

## Pillars of the Tusla's Data Management and Digital Transformation Strategy

This strategy sets out the objectives and actions under nine core themes/pillars that will collectively deliver on the strategy's vision over the next three years.



Fig. Pillars of the Data Management and Digital Transformation Strategy

The **objectives and action plans of the key pillars are set out in the following sections of this strategy document**. The pillars for **Data Privacy and Information Security are not included as these are already established and documented under Tusla's GDPR and Information Security programmes respectively**. However, the action plans presented across all pillars in this document are aligned with both these established programmes.



## 2. Digital and Data Infrastructure

---

*To establish a joined up digital and data environment that provides modern, secure, integrated systems to support the delivery of all Tusla services*

---

### Tusla's current digital and data infrastructure

The **Tusla Portal** launched 2018, is now established as the digital front door for referrals, notifications or submissions to Tusla services. There are now 27 services available on the Portal, such as child protection welfare reporting and education welfare referrals. The Portal also provides a digital collaboration space for our partners, such as child and family related service providers, schools, early years providers and others to securely exchange information with Tusla. The **Portal now receives over 100,000 online submissions annually. Tusla Case Management (TCM) system**, launched in 2021, provides a single, integrated case management system that, over time, will be implemented across all Tusla services. TCM provides a single view of each child, young person, family, care provider and others who are engaged with Tusla. The vision for the system is to support all Tusla functions to work in an efficient and joined-up way in the delivering of our services. TCM is currently used by fifteen services across Tusla.

### The vision for Portal and TCM over the next three years under this Strategy

The **Portal** will continue to be progressed as the **Digital-First channel** for all exchanges of records to and from Tusla. While promoting Digital First, this strategy recognises that online will not be available or be the preferred option for everyone who wishes to engage with our services. Tusla will continue to support paper submissions but will establish processes to **digitise at the front door**, meaning that all subsequent internal work follows a digital-only channel. **TCM will continue to be extended to become the single integrated case management system** across all Tusla services providing:



**Joined-up digital systems and data for joined-up services.** TCM will provide a single integrated case management across all Tusla services.



**A single view of the child,** family and their connections across all services and all engagements with Tusla.



**Excellence in record keeping.** TCM will continue to be designed for comprehensive and ease of record-keeping supporting the full information life cycle of our case files.



**Data Privacy by Design.** Data Protection considerations will continue to permeate all aspects of TCM.



**Ease of use:** TCM was designed by practitioners for practitioners as an intuitive system to use. It includes capabilities like dashboards, wizards, templates and auto completes to support users in finding and entering data.

Put simply, the **vision for The Portal and TCM systems is to provide a single joined-up data and digital ecosystem for all the services that Tusla delivers.** Tusla's Finance and HR systems will also be integrated such that funding, payments and staff planning can all also be effectively operated.

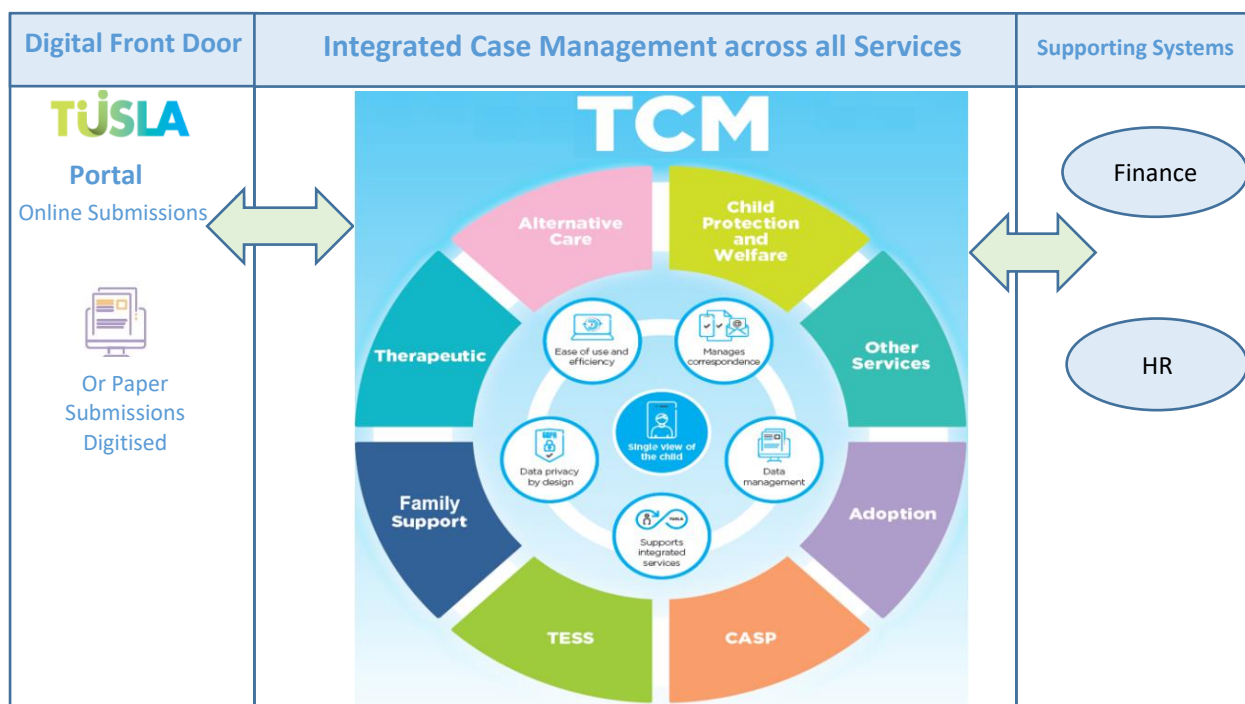


Fig. Joined up digital and data environment supporting Integrated Services

## Digital and Data Infrastructure Action Plan

Ref	Action	Complete by
DI-1	<b>Develop and phase launch the next generation of the Portal (Portal 2.0).</b> The current Portal is five years old and will be refreshed with a new modern platform that maximises the use of latest innovation.	Q4 '24 – Q4 '25
DI-2	<b>Integrate the Portal with the Tusla Case Management (TCM) for all services</b> to enable referrals and other submissions to automatically flow into the case file, thereby removing the need to manually enter this data. The integration will work two-way to also allow letters, documents, and forms to be shared as appropriate from the case file to external persons such as parents, professionals and partner organisations. A single joined-up system that facilitates the effective, secure and appropriate collaboration of all those involved in supporting the child, young person or family.	Q4 '24 – Q4 '25
DI-3	<b>Implement Tusla Case Management System for Residential Care services</b> moving this service to an electronic case system for the first time. This will involve the phased roll out of three modules under TCM - Centre Management, Placement Management and Care Files Case Management.	Q1 '24- Q4 '24

DI-4	Implement <b>Tusla Case Management System for Foster Care services</b> moving this service to an electronic case system for the first time. This will involve a phase roll out of three systems for to support Fostering Applications, Fostering Committees and Foster Cares Case Management.	Q3 '24- Q2 '25
DI-5	Implement <b>Tusla Case Management System for Early Years services</b> . Phased roll out of new systems to support Early Years services, including the new registration for childminders.	Q3 '24- Q4 '25
DI-6	Implement <b>Tusla Case Management System</b> for all remaining services in phases, including <b>After Care, Family Support, Adoption and Therapeutic services</b> .	Q2 '24- Q4 '25
DI-7	Integration of Case Systems with <b>Finance systems</b> to enable all payments related to care placements to be driven by care placement records on the case file.	Q2 '24- Q4 '25
DI-8	Continuously enhance the Tusla Case Management System to maximise the benefits it can bring to support the efficient <b>integrated delivery of services as well as supports for social work and social care practice</b> .	Ongoing
DI-9	Extend Portal and Tusla Case Management system to provide <b>an integrated system that Tusla staff, our partners and the families we support can all use</b> to share and collaborate on seamlessly. Examples, may include families using these systems to view relevant parts of their case file, or collaborating on documents and plans with their Tusla social worker or other practitioners.	Q4 '26

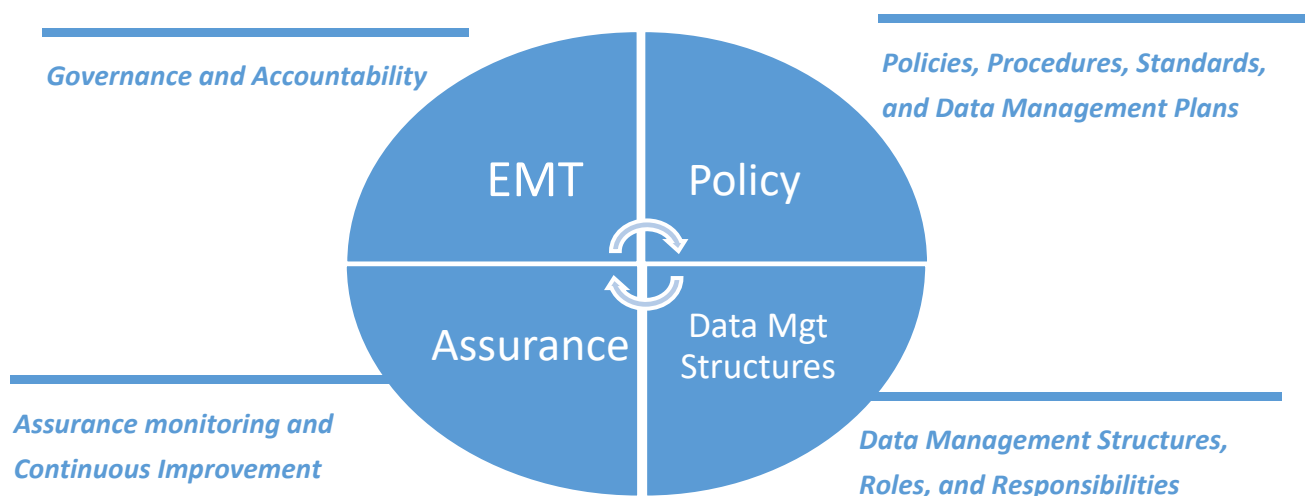


### 3. Data and Digital Governance

*To further enhance governance structures for the overall management of data and digital systems in Tusla*

#### Data and Digital Governance Objectives under this Strategy:

This strategy will strengthen data and digital governance structures consisting of the four integrated pillars as outlined below.



#### Executive Management Team (EMT)



##### *Governance & Accountability*

Governance and accountability in Tusla is established under the Executive Management Team (EMT). This includes **governance and accountability arrangements for the management of the Agency's data and digital systems**. A key deliverable under this strategy will be a **Charter for the Governance Arrangements of Data Management and Digital Systems**. The charter will define the roles and responsibilities at all levels in Tusla concerning the management of data and the use of digital systems.

## Policy, Procedures, Standards and Data Management Plans



### *Policies, Procedures, Standards, Data Management Plans*

A new ICT/Data related policy framework was implemented in 2021 to ensure there is clarity, consistency and best practice embedded in the management of data, digital systems, and general ICT across the Agency. Furthermore, Tusla's Data Protection Unit (DPU) have

established a policy framework in relation to data protection and related areas. Under this new strategy, these policy frameworks will continue to be enhanced to provide for the appropriate governance of all aspects of data management in Tusla. This will also include the continued development of data management plans for each service in Tusla that will provide: a clear **definition of the data**; the purpose and basis of the data processing; how it is stored; who can access it; how it is used; with whom it can be shared and under what conditions; how data quality is managed; how long it is retained and how it is securely destroyed if applicable. The data management plans also include a key focus on operational efficiency to ensure only the data that is needed is collected and that data is only collected once (enter once, use often).

## Assurance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement



### *Assurance monitoring and Continuous Improvement*

Tusla ICT in conjunction with the Quality Assurance (QA) Directorate will develop and implement a compliance programme to monitor that the relevant policies, procedures, protocols, and guidelines are

embedded in practice across the Agency. Assessment of agreed checks related to data management, digital systems and ICT will form part of monitoring visits and will be used both as an indicator of the success of the implementation of this strategy and as a source of learning to inform continuous improvement initiatives. Tusla's Internal Audit (IA) unit further strengthen the overall monitoring by independently performing annual audits of Digital, Data, and ICT related systems and services.

## Data Management Structures



### *Data Management Structures, Roles, and Responsibilities*

The Tusla Reform Programme has established authority and accountability for the delivery of services under the Regional Chief

Officers (RCOs) across Tusla's six regions. This strategy positions data management as a function under the authority of the RCOs for the services under their remit. A data management team in each region will support the implementation of data policy, data quality and other data management initiatives, and will also support the use and implementation of digital systems. Arrangements will also be established for Tusla's national and corporate services to similarly support the implementation of the initiatives under this strategy.

## Data and Digital Governance Action Plan

To achieve the data governance objectives established under this strategy the following action plan will be progressed.

Ref	Action	Complete by
DG-1	Develop a charter defining the <b>Governance Arrangements for Data Management and Digital Systems in Tusla</b> . The charter will define the roles and responsibilities at all levels in Tusla concerning the management of data the use of digital systems.	Q2 '24
DG-2	Develop <b>data management plans</b> that define the templates (forms and correspondence), data definitions (what we collect), data flows (what and how we share), data protection requirements including lawful basis for processing, data security controls, retention, and data quality processes to support the operation of <b>each of Tusla's services</b> . The data management plans will be developed in phases over three years of this strategy.	Q2 '24- Q4 '26
DG-3	<b>Establish data management functions</b> . A data manager post and team in each region will support the implementation of data policy, data quality, analytics and other data management initiatives as well as supporting the use and implementation of digital systems. Arrangements will also be established for Tusla's national and corporate services to similarly support the implementation of the initiatives under this strategy.	Q4 '24
DG-4	<b>Enhance Tusla's Policy framework (policies, procedures standards and guidelines)</b> as required to ensure ongoing alignment to Government related policy and evolving data management, digital and general ICT best practice as well as supporting alignment to the ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security and other agreed standards.	Ongoing
DG-5	Produce a <b>Data Management annual report</b> at both regional and national level. The report will detail the current data management posture and will consist of performance against agreed data quality indicators, compliance levels, data maturity assessment, programme progress updates, risk analysis and future planning.  An <b>overarching progress report</b> will be presented to the Tusla Executive and the relevant committee of the Board each year. The annual report will consist of an end of year assessment and programme overview for the coming year.	Q1 '25
DG-6	Develop and implement a <b>data management compliance programme</b> to monitor that data management policies, procedures, protocols, and guidelines are embedded in practice across the Agency. Assessment of data management practice will form part of monitoring visits and will be used both as an indicator	Q4 '24

	of the success of the implementation of this strategy and as a source of learning to inform continuous improvement initiatives.	
--	---	--

## 4. Records Management

---

*To continue to advance a well-functioning Records Management environment for all current case files and to progress improvements in the management of historical files.*

---

*“records management relates to a broad set of corporate responsibilities and enables Public Service bodies carry out their functions effectively in addition to supporting the smooth operational requirements of National Archives, Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation”*  
– Public Service Data Strategy, 2019 – 2023

### Historical Challenges

The introduction section of this strategy outlines the **historical low level of data and ICT maturity from which Tusla commenced**. Effectively, all services operated paper-based systems or at best used limited legacy ICT systems that were not fit for purpose. This legacy deficit means that the historical records of the Agency are dispersed across:

- **Paper records** contained in 1,000s of onsite filing cabinets and 10,000s of storage boxes located with various contracted storage partners. Paper filing practices over many decades in most cases were inconsistent and likely did not follow a consistent prescribed filing plan.
- **Electronic records** such as Word or Excel documents stored in file shares containing over 12 million documents. Some of these documents include what was known as ‘Registers’, which were large spreadsheets used as de facto case trackers/systems. Similar, to paper files, the filing practices for electronic records were also limited.
- **Legacy databases** that were in the most part limited electronic system case management systems.

The historical limitations in records systems means that for the most part these records will be challenging to work with and put in good order. A summary view of the scale of the historical records and associated challenges for each service across Tusla is outlined in an internal auxiliary document to this strategy – ‘Tusla Historical Records Overview’.

In addition, a further key issue is set out below:

**Key Issue:** Most historical electronic files had **no agreed unique identifier for a child**. This means, there is **no way with certainty to join these records or link them to a child in a paper file or case files in the new TCM system**. Put simply, there are **insufficient data points to join up historical electronic records with a case file**.

To address these historical deficits, a new **Information/Records Management Office** was established in 2021 under Tusla ICT. The Office provides advice and support on records management best practice, as well as assisting services in the development of filing plans, retentions schedules, preservation supports, digitisation, indexing and, certified destruction processes. New **records management policy, best practice and guidance** were developed with a help desk service to provide records management support and advice to staff. A **National Digitising and Indexing Service** was established that all Tusla services nationwide can access to scan paper files on demand.



## Records Management Objectives under this Strategy

This strategy will build on the work over the past numbers of years and continue to advance improvements in records environment across all Tusla services. The **primary focus will centre on current cases** such that all current and future case records will be handled on a well-functioning records system that enforces good records management practice and data quality. As set out in the Digital Transformation actions of this strategy, all services will adopt the TCM system as their single system of record. **TCM will be further advanced to ensure it supports and enforces good records management.** To achieve this, TCM must be a system that staff can feel confident using to manage the entirety of their case work.

This strategy recognises **that there are considerable constraints in what can be achieved with historical case records due to the low base in data maturity from which Tusla commenced.** For this reason, it is accepted that **it will take two generations of Tusla's Data Management Strategies (i.e. six years) to fully address the historical records.** The ambition of this strategy is to put in place the structures and to commence the transformation programme to enhance the management of these records with year-on-year improvements. The objectives to be advanced over the next three years under this pillar of the strategy are set out below.

<b>Records Management Plans</b> Develop records filing plans, classification, standards, guidelines, retention schedules and quality assurance processes for all services covering electronic case management files, historical electronic and paper files	<b>Information Asset Register</b> Continue to enhance Tusla's information asset register and complete reviews of filing locations used by all services	<b>Records Destruction as appropriate</b> Secure certified destruction of redundant, obsolete and trivial records in line with the records destruction policy
<b>Preservation, Acquisition &amp; Accession</b> Develop Preservation Policy, Records Acquisition and Accession Policy to support Tusla's statutory remit in relation to children in care and other records that requiring preservation	<b>Digitisation &amp; Indexing</b> Continue to progress the digitisation of legacy case files as required for preservation, FOI, Data Access Request and Criminal Disclosures	<b>Records Management Policy</b> Contribute to considerations on records related provisions as part of the Child Care Act review. Continue to embed Records Management Policy & Best Practice Guidelines across all Tusla services
<b>Access Policy</b> Access Policy to ensure a high level of respect, professionalism and integrity in handling historical records	<b>Historical Unstructured Electronic Files</b> Explore options for the use of automation/technology to assist with the management of historical unstructured electronic files. Recognising the limitations of what can be achieved	<b>Historical Paper Files</b> Develop proposals for a centralised archive service to store Tusla's paper records. Subject to approval progress the establishment of the service and a programme to support the transfer, digitisation or secure destruction of these records as appropriate

Fig. Records Management Objectives under this Strategy

## The vision for Records Management in Tusla

The records of the Agency will be transformed from the current environment that is fragmented (records held in diverse range of locations and formats as visualised below) with various records management limitations to a new well-functioning environment that consists of:



**Current and future case records** for all services will be managed in the **TCM system**. TCM will be designed to ensure it supports and enforces good records management practice.



**Secure Digital Archive**













**Historical electronic case records** currently held on file shares will be set to read only, classified, and transferred to a Secure Digital Archive. Files that are **still actively referenced** can be accessed by the relevant case workers as appropriate. Files no longer referenced will be restricted. The archive will enforce security, support the classification of records, and manage their retention and if appropriate certified destruction at the appropriate time.



**Central Paper File Archive**

**Historical paper case records** that require preservation will be transferred to a dedicated Tusla Archive service. This will involve an archivist review of each box of files to determine what should be processed for certified destruction in line with agreed retention schedules; or what should be scanned/digitised and stored in the Secure Digital Archive or what must still be retained as paper records and transfer to the new Central Paper File Archive.

In addition, where appropriate some records sets may be **transferred to/from another authority**. Examples of transfers include records held by external residential care providers that Tusla may be required to take into ownership or records Tusla hold that may be deemed appropriate to transfer to another public service body such as the National Archives. The graphic below presents how Tusla records management will be advanced by this strategy with all records moving from the current dispersed environment to new definitive and well-functioning records environment consisting of the TCM system, a new Secure Digital Archive and a new Central Paper File Archive.

Current Records Environment	Records Planning and Transformation Commenced Under this Strategy	Future Records Environment and Potential Options
 Paper files ~1,000 Onsite Cabinets  Paper files in Contracted Storage Boxes x 10,000s Contracts x 100s  Electronic files x~12m docs  Registers x 100s  Legacy Databases X ~20  External Providers Records		  Secure Digital Archive  Central Paper File Archive  Certified Disposal (as appropriate)  Transfer Ownership (as appropriate)

## Records Management Action Plan

To achieve the records management objectives established under this strategy the following action plan will be progressed.

Ref	Action	Complete by
RM-1	<b>Records Management Plans Pilot: Develop best-practice model in records management</b> for pilot services covering <b>Filing Plans, Classification, Record Standards, Guidelines, Retention Schedules, and Quality Assurance processes</b> . The best-practice model will be applied in the TCM system, such that the required standard in records management is supported and applied to all current and future case files. These models will then be used and adapted over time by all services.	Q3 '24
RM-2	<b>Records Management Plans Roll-Out:</b> Implement the <b>best-practice model in records management</b> on a phased basis as each service is on-boarded to the TCM system.	Q3 '24– Q2 '26
RM-3	Establish a <b>Central Paper File Archive service</b> : Develop proposals (by Q1 '24) for the environmental and physical storage requirements of a <b>contracted archive service to store Tusla's paper records</b> . Subject to approval proceed to tender for the service. Once established the service will become the single national provider for all storage of Tusla's paper files.	Q3 '24
RM-4	Establish an <b>Information Asset Register</b> . Over time, the register will become the definitive listing of all Tusla's files, with key information such as the file ID, file location, owner, classification, relevant dates, and other related attributes.	Q3 '24
RM-5	Establish a <b>Secure Digital Archive system</b> for the storage of historical electronic files that cannot be readily linked to case files in TCM system. The archive system will support the security, retention, and if appropriate the certified destruction of the records.	Q2 '25
RM-6	<b>Historical Paper Files Transformation:</b> progress a transformation programme for historical paper files. This will commence with a discovery phase to log the location of all files (such as storage locations and cabinets). The files will undergo archivist review and be appropriately recorded on the new Information Asset Register. Following archival review, the paper files will be transferred to Tusla's new centralised paper archive service or/and digitised for digital preservation in Tusla's new secure digital archive or sent for secure destruction if appropriate. The programme will <b>initially prioritise the State's historical adoption paper files</b> . The ambition of this action will be <b>subject to the level of potential additional budget made available to fund this work</b> . It is also recognised that this action will carry over beyond the lifetime of this strategy, given the scale of paper records involved it is estimated to be a six year programme.	Q1 '24– Q4 '26+

RM-7	<b>Historical Electronic Files Transformation:</b> progress a transformation programme for electronic files such as Word and Excel documents stored on file share folders. The file shares will undergo archivist review and be appropriately recorded on the new Information Asset Register. Following archival review, the electronic files will be transferred to Tusla's new secure Digital Archive or sent for secure destruction, if appropriate. Like historical paper files, the ambition of this action will be <b>subject to the level of potential additional budget made available to fund this work</b> . It is recognised that this action will also carry over beyond the lifetime of this strategy, given the scale of electronic records involved this is also estimated to be a 6 year programme.	Q1 '24- Q4 '26+
RM-8	Develop <b>Access, Preservation, Records Acquisition and Accession Policies</b> to support Tusla's statutory remit in relation to children in care and other records which require preservation. The policies will be founded on the principles of GDPR and record management best practices that will support an environment of respect, professionalism, and integrity in the handling of the historical records.	Q2 '25
RM-9	The records management team in Tusla ICT will undertake a review of the current <b>Records Management Policy &amp; Best Practice</b> . This will also include working with the office of the Chief Social Worker and the Department of Children, Equality, Integration, Disability and Youth in seeking to maximise the potential opportunities for enhancing the records related legislated provisions available to Tusla as part of the current review of the Child Care Act.	Q3 '24

## 5. Data Quality Management

*To continue to improve the quality of data held by Tusla by developing processes for measuring, monitoring and reporting conformance to prescribed data quality standards and by implementing a continuous data quality improvement plan and supporting operational structures*

### Data Quality Objectives under this Strategy

Notwithstanding the progress over recent years, it is important to recognise that the overall quality of the data held by Tusla remains at a low level of maturity due to the low base from which these initiatives commenced and the ongoing challenging and complex environment in which our services operate. Tusla has a long journey ahead to advance data quality to the required level and this strategy establishes a commitment and focus to continue these improvement initiatives. The Top 3 measures of success to be delivered under this theme of the strategy include:

#### Single complete record shared by all services for

- Child record
- Foster Parents
- Residential Providers
- Professionals
- Staff
- Providers/Services

#### Use of Identifiers

- Eircode on all addresses
- PPSN on all children in care records.
- Universal Business Identifier (UBI) for all vendors and partners
- Electoral District for all service catchment areas

#### Validation

- All performance metrics published by Tusla are auto generated from our electronic systems of record as the definitive single source of the truth

**Fig. What success will look like. Top 3 Measures.**

### Data Quality Frameworks

Tusla has referenced HIQA's Data Quality Framework guidance as well as internationally recognised data quality frameworks to inform this action plan. The term data quality refers not only to the characteristics of the data but also to the processes used to measure and improve the quality of the data. To measure data quality Tusla has adopted the following dimensions of data quality as adapted from the frameworks referenced above:

Dimension	Definition	Examples
Completeness	Are all data records completed as required?	All child records have a date of birth
Validity	Does the data conform to associated data control rules?	Child welfare records are for persons under 18 years of age
Accuracy	Does the data correctly describe the event or object?	Address information accurately matching an Eircode



Consistency	Can we compare data across different data sets (e.g. different systems)?	Readily matching a service provider's record in a case management system to their record in the financial payments system
Reasonability	Does the data match previous or expected patterns?	Are there spikes or anomalies in the data statistics in one area that may indicate an error or some form of inconsistency
Uniqueness	Is the data recorded only once?	A single master record of a child's details
Timeliness	Is the data recorded in appropriate amount of time after the event being recorded occurred?	Time it may take for a case reported to Tusla to be entered on the system

### Data Quality Action Plan under this Strategy

To achieve the data quality goals established under this strategy the following action plan will be progressed.

Ref	Action	Complete By
DQ-1	Expand the <b>Tusla Data Quality Framework across all Services</b> building on the work done on several core services over the last number of years. The framework will consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define metrics for measuring data quality across each service.</li> <li>Establish structures to monitor data quality and action improvement plans.</li> <li>Develop an annual Data Quality report to provide oversight of progress against targets.</li> </ul>	Q2 '24- Q4 '26
DQ-2	Integrate operating <b>procedures to report on data quality</b> under existing Service Monitoring and Improvement structures in Tusla. Recognising the importance of data quality as a performance metric owned by the Chief Officers and Directors responsible for each service.	Q1 '24
DQ-3	Expand a <b>Data Quality Dashboard</b> across all services whereby the quality of records can be monitored against set quality criteria. The quality dashboard will be used to support <b>Data Quality Assessments and track improvement initiatives.</b>	Q1 '24- Q1 '25
DQ-4	Deliver an annual <b>Data Quality Improvement Plan</b> which will set out high-level tasks to improve data quality in each service. Initially, the focus in year 1 will be improvements in identity management and ensuring a single digital record of a child across all services in the Agency.	Q1 '24- Q4 '26
DQ-5	Increase use of <b>definite registers (known as Master and Reference data)</b> across all relevant datasets held by Tusla. For example, this will provide a	Q1 '24- Q4 '26

	single definite register of children we support; providers we engage with; carers we work with; staff; services we offer and so on. This will also involve expanding the use of trusted national identifiers such as Eircode, PPSN and the Unique Business Identifier across relevant datasets and records held by Tusla.	
--	---	--

## 6. Analytics and Business Intelligence

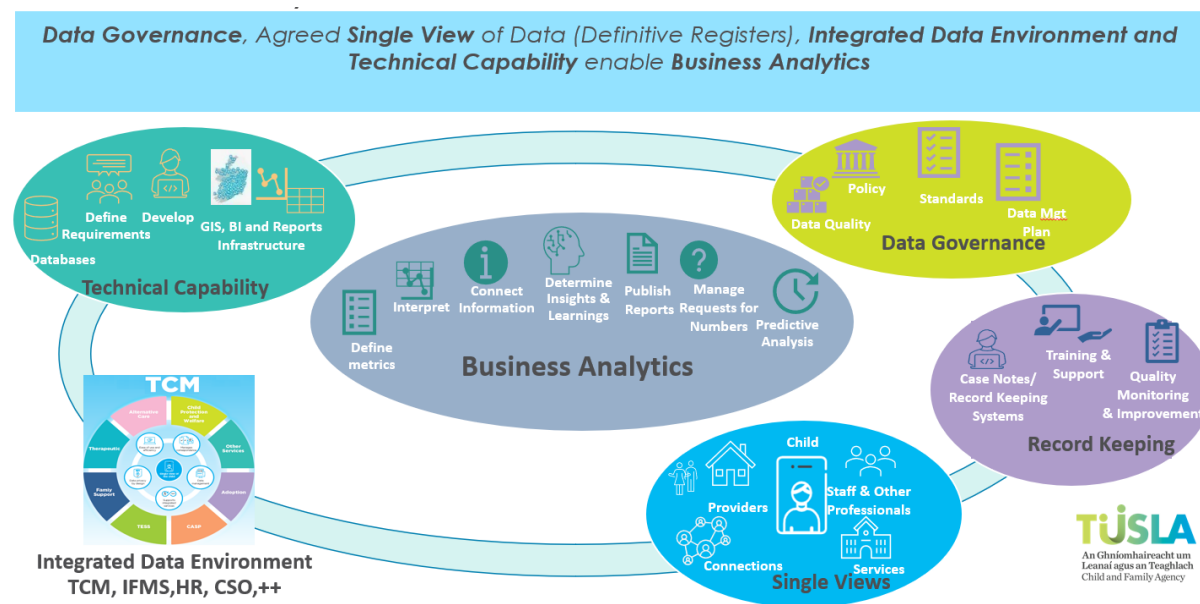
*Further enhance capabilities to support performance reporting, evidence-based decision making and the evaluation of outcomes with integrated business analytics*

*“Data is the foundation of decision making and the basis for accountability. In order to effect good policies and provide useful statistical insights, data must be used to support evidence based or informed decision-making. Evidence based decision making, whether by Government, business or the general public, is reliant on directly available quality data or insights derived through research. The vision espoused in this strategy promotes better treatment of data through improved data management, governance and architecture, where quality data improves and feeds into evidence-based decision-making”*

*– Public Service Data Strategy, 2019 - 2023*

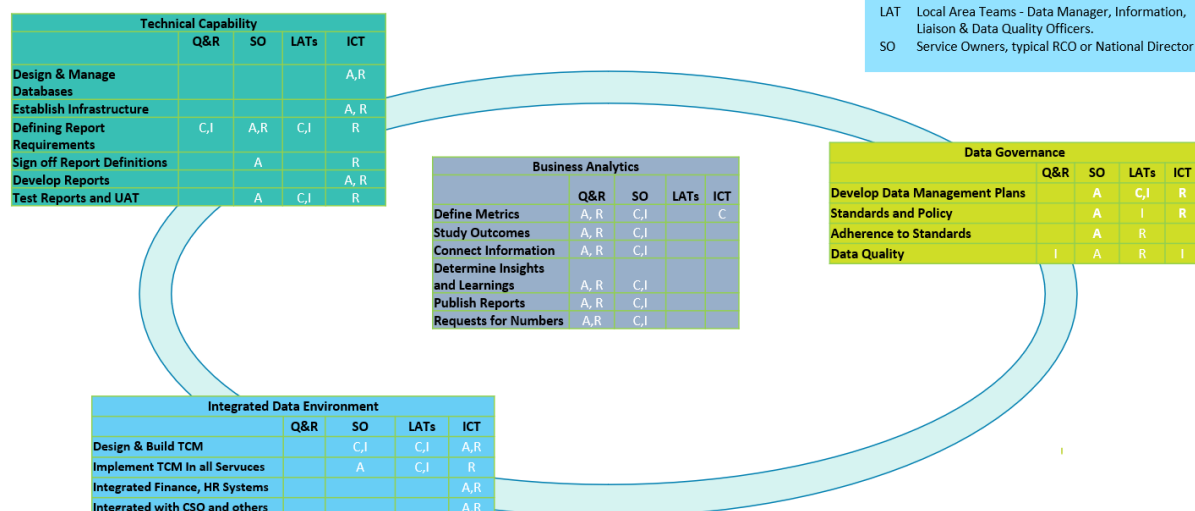
### The vision for Analytics Capability in Tusla

The Data and Digital Infrastructure, Data Governance, Data Quality and Records Management pillars of this strategy together with the Technical Capability already in place are enablers to enhance the use of analytics across Tusla as visualised below.



Business Analytics functions will be co-ordinated across ICT, Quality Assurance Directorate, Regional Data Management Teams (currently known as Local Area Teams - LATs) and Service Owners (typically Chief Officers and National Directors) as visualised in the RACI below.

# Business Analytics RACI









## Tusla Outcomes Framework

The Tusla Outcomes Framework is an initiative to better evidence the contribution made to improving the lives of the children, young people and families who attend our services. The national outcomes for children and young people policy will underpin a strategic framework for a whole-of-government, multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children. The Business Analytics pillar of this strategy will support the outcomes framework by enable the required metrics from Tusla services to be readily available.

## Business Analytics Objectives under this Strategy:

The business analytics objectives under this strategy are to enable an environment to:

-  **Define Metrics:** Continue to identify and define the key metrics required.
-  **Connect Information:** Connect data as appropriate across Tusla and relevant external datasets.
-  **Interpret:** Interpret metrics to determine insights and learnings.
-  **Publish reports:** report on the metrics and insights.
-  **Numbers:** Readily handle request for numbers.
-  **Predictive analysis:** Use the data to inform planning and to predict future needs.

This pillar of the strategy will also seek to support and promote opportunities for **integrated analysis across whole of government datasets**, such as opportunities for joined up **longitudinal studies** of outcomes for children in care.

## Business Analytics Action Plan under this Strategy

Ref	Action	Complete By
BA-1	Under the Quality Assurance Directorate continue the <b>governance and management of the definitions of metrics</b> across all services.	Ongoing
BA-2	<b>Develop automated integrated reporting of metrics, service demand and other operational</b> reports as each service onboards to the TCM system which for the first time will provide a definitive electronic system of record that can be used to drive analytics across all services. This objective will be delivered on a phased basis in line with the roll out of the TCM system. This will also include the development of <b>business intelligence dashboards and geo-spatial mapping</b> to support the visualisations of data. The integrated reporting capability will use all Tusla datasets (such as Operational Services, Finance, HR, Commissioned Partners, Funding/Grants) and also other available external datasets such as the CSO published data to give <b>joined-up visualisation of services, capability, demands and outcomes</b> .	Q1 '24- Q2 '25
BA-3	Development and approval of a Tusla <b>Outcomes Framework</b> , with a supporting logic model and implementation plan to guide the integration of the framework into existing service provision. This will include identification of relevant indicators to support outcomes measurement. The initial round of outcomes data is planned to be collected, analysed and reported by Q1 2025.	Q2 '24-
BA-4	Continue to expand Tusla's <b>open data capability and publishing plan</b> for identified and appropriate datasets in line with the Public Service Open Data Strategy.	Ongoing
BA-5	Explore opportunities for engagement with CSO and other bodies to support <b>longitudinal studies</b> using relevant dataset outputs from Tusla Commissioned Research.	Ongoing
BA-6	Enhance Tusla's <b>Analytics technical infrastructure</b> and overall capability. This will include the implementation of a new analytics platform and sourcing a contracted analytics partner.	Q2 '24-
BA-7	Provide data related supports for <b>Tusla's Open Science and Research</b> initiatives under the National Research Office.	Ongoing



## 7. Emerging Technologies

---

*To establish the structures and policy concerning emerging technologies such that Tusla can maximise the potential of new innovations while ensuring their uses are managed appropriately.*

---

The emergence of new technologies over the next three years will present further opportunities to maximise the use of innovation in supporting the delivery of Tusla's services. These technologies have the potential to provide automation and other solutions to assist staff in their work as well as the ability for enhanced data analytics that provide improved insights and evidence-based decision making. This strategy will establish the framework to both explore these opportunities and ensure that appropriateness and ethical considerations underpin any potential uses. Two immediate technologies to be assessed in the early phase of this strategy due to their potential and applicability are **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Blockchain**.

### Artificial Intelligence (AI)

*"Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to machine-based systems, with varying levels of autonomy, that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations or decisions using data. Machine Learning, a subset of AI, is software which is able to learn from applicable datasets to self-improve, without being explicitly programmed by human programmer"*

National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, AI Here for Good - Government of Ireland

The recently published '**National Artificial Intelligence Strategy AI Here for Good**' sets out the ambition for Ireland to be an international leader in AI to the benefit of our economy and society. The strategy highlights the strong need for guiding principles and governance structure to be put in place from authoritative sources in the Government in relation to the adoption of AI. Two objectives of relevance to Tusla are contained in the strategy relate "**Open a conversation with children and young people about AI** through Comhairle na nÓg, the national structure for consultation with children and young people [DETE / DCEDIY]" and the "**Establishment of an Ombudsman/Regulatory body similar to the Data Commission with oversight of AI adoption, development and deployment.**"

Tusla will align with these strategies and direction coming from Government on the use of AI. Tusla **will adopt an AI impact assessment process** to assess the potential impact of any use of this technology and to ensure appropriate governance, controls, transparency, planning and implementation. Any potential use of AI that may involve personal data will first follow the established governance and arrangements under Tusla's Data Protection Unit. This will include completing Data Privacy Impact Assessments to ensure the principles of data privacy underpin any potential considerations in the use of AI.

## Blockchain for Records and Information Management

Blockchain is what is known as a Distributed Ledger Transactional (DLT) system and is an umbrella term used to describe technologies that distribute records or information among all those using it. Blockchain inherently provides a method that ensures trust in the authenticity and control of these records (known as immutable records). Data is stored in the digital ledger in such a way that tampering with the data is immediately obvious. Once data or transactions are appended and confirmed it is impossible to change or alter it. Participants can trust that any attempt to tamper with data is prevented. This control and auditable nature of Blockchain provides an assurance to persons whose data we hold. It also provides assurance for the long-term integrity of digital documents that Tusla are obliged to ready for preservation such as adoption and children in care records. The use of Blockchain also has potential to improve the efficiency of processing Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests.

*'essentially as a database that can be shared across a network of multiple sites, geographies or institutions. All participants within a network can have their own identical copy of the ledger. Any changes to the ledger are reflected in all copies in minutes, or in some cases, seconds. The assets can be financial, legal, physical or electronic. The security and accuracy of the assets stored in the ledger are maintained cryptographically through the use of 'keys' and signatures to control who can do what within the shared ledger. Entries can also be updated by one, some or all of the participants, according to rules agreed by the network.'*

*Office of Science, Gov.UK*

ID	Action	Complete By
ET-1	<b>Develop a position paper on AI</b> to identify opportunities based on international examples of the potential use of AI in supporting Tusla's services. The paper will also detail proposed structures concerning the governance, assessment, approval, monitoring and control of its use.	Q3 '24
ET-2	Establish an <b>AI assessment impact methodology</b> and governance structures to be adopted for potential future uses of this technology in Tusla.	Q1 '25
ET-3	Subject to approval and appropriate governance progress a <b>pilot AI initiative</b> as a proof-of-concept to inform future planning.	Q2 '25
ET-4	Deliver a <b>proof-of-concept project using Blockchain</b> for the management of a pilot set of digital records.	Q2 '25
ET-5	Subject to successful outcomes from pilot initiatives develop an <b>action plan for the implementation of AI and Blockchain</b> over the remaining years of this strategy.	Q3 '25
ET-6	<b>Ongoing monitoring of emerging technologies</b> with particular focus on innovations internationally in the areas of health and social care that may present opportunities. Emerging technologies opportunities will be formally accessed annually and be included in an annual report on the progress of this strategy.	Ongoing

## 8. Emerging Legislation and Policy

---

*To ensure Tusla is informed on and considers the relevance, obligations, and opportunities regarding emerging legislation and policy.*

---

This strategy will establish structures to ensure Tusla is informed on relevant legislation and policy that is emerging nationally and at a wider EU level regarding data, digital and associated areas. This will see the establishment of a remit under existing functions in the Agency with the required expertise to become informed of the relevance, obligations, impact, and opportunities of the emerging landscape. An ‘emerging’ report will be developed annually and shared with the relevant stakeholders across Tusla. The following recent emerging legislation and policy will be covered in the 2024 report; this will also cover legislation that may have been enacted several years ago, but with provisions that only recently came into force or are due to come into force.

- Ireland - Child Care (Amendment) Bill, 2023
- Ireland - Health Information Bill 2023
- Ireland - HIQA National Standards for Information Management in Health and Social Care, 2023
- Ireland - Data Sharing and Governance act 2019
- Ireland – Policing, Security & Community Safety Act 2024
- EU - Critical Entities Resilience Directive, 2023
- EU - Critical Entities Resilience Directive, 2023
- EU Digital Services Act, 2022
- EU Health Data Space Regulation, 2023
- EU Data Governance Act, 2022
- EU Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA)
- EU Artificial Intelligence Act 2024

ID	Action	Complete By
EL-1	Establish a remit in the Agency under existing functions with the required expertise to become informed of the relevance, obligations, impact, and opportunities of the emerging landscape.	Q2 '24
EL-2	Produce an annual ‘emerging landscape’ report in 2024 and again in 2025 and 2026.	Q2 '24

## 9. Increased Capability

---

*To establish the capability at all levels in Tusla to deliver the programme of work under this strategy and to provide for the embedding and continued improvement in data management and digital innovation in supporting all activities of the Agency.*

---

The development of capability at all levels is fundamental to achieve the goals and objectives of this strategy. Furthermore, excellence in data management and digitisation is not an end but rather an ongoing continuous improvement that requires permanent capability to ensure that Tusla's data and digital maturity develops year on year with ongoing increased benefit. The 'Increase Capability' pillar will seek to define a resourcing plan; recruit new expertise subject to funding; develop the capabilities of staff in data management and use of digital solutions; and finally seek to maximise existing resources where available. The plan below outlines the actions to be progressed.

ID	Action	Complete By
IC-1	Develop a <b>data management, digital transformation, and general ICT resourcing plan</b> in line with Tusla's Reform Programme that will define the capability required to deliver this strategy. The plan will include a proposal to recruit roles subject to funding and propose to utilise existing capabilities where available.	Q2 '24
IC-2	<b>Staff development:</b> Provide guidance, supports and training to all staff on data management and use of digital solutions. This will include a focus on data handling responsibilities to continue to embed a culture of good management of data that ensures benefits such as regulatory compliance, administration efficiently, knowledge management and information security.	ongoing