



An Gníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## Emergency Out of Hours Service briefing information

### 1. Background.

Tusla is establishing the EOHS in 2015. The EOHS will incorporate the existing EPSS. The key objective of the service is to co-operate with and support the Garda Síochána in the execution of their duties and responsibilities under Section 12(3) of the Child Care Act, 1991.

The EOHS provides the Garda Síochána with the following:

- A national Call Centre providing social work consultation and advice. The national Call Centre will be provided by the Crisis Intervention Service (CIS).
- Placements for children under Section 12(3) of the Child Care Act, 1991; Child placements will continue to be provided under contract to Tusla by 5Rivers Irl.
- Access to a local on-call social worker.  
Agreement has been reached with Impact to proceed with an Expression of Interest process to identify on-call social work staff.

Subject to a joint National Protocol with An Garda Síochána and the contractor the EOHS will include the following components:-

1. The service will operate 6.00 pm to 7.00 am 365 days per year and 9.00am to 5.00 pm every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday;
2. For purposes of EOHS provision, the country (all Area's excluding Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow) to be structured into 8 contact points, each under the general direction of designated Area Managers;
3. The service will be coordinated through a national Call Centre at the CIS;
4. All Garda stations will access the EOHS by calling the CIS;
5. Staff on EOHS duty will provide advice and consultation to the Garda Síochána to assist in their determination as to the needs of the child, by telephone and on call out as required;
6. Where a staff call out is required the staff member on duty will accompany a member of the Garda Síochána;
7. Staff on-call will have access to the CIS for information or advice as required;
8. Local access to files/records will be subject to local systems and arrangements; the National Child Care Information System which is currently being implemented will, when implemented locally, provide electronic access to files;

9. Placements required under Section 12 will be provided within the EOHS by a contractor;
10. The service will include children placed in hospital for medical reasons under Sect 12 and requiring follow up placement.

## **2. On-call social work staff.**

The Agreement with Impact states the following in this regard:

“Assignment of suitably qualified staff for out of hours on-call duties will be on the basis of an expression of interest. The endorsement of the Area Manager in the region is required.

Staffing of the service is limited to the following grades:

- Social Worker currently working in TUSLA, with significant relevant experience (3 years post qualification with Tusla / HSE Children and Family Services / or equivalent);
- Senior Social Work Practitioner;
- Team Leader;
- Principal Social Worker”.

## **3. Payment for duties.**

The Agreement with Impact sets out the following:

“On-call social work staff will be paid a flat rate of €200 per shift regardless of the extent of duties which may occur. Allowable travel and subsistence expenses may be claimed for expenses incurred “wholly exclusively and necessarily” in the performance of on-call duties”. Where existing out of hours arrangements are in place (Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Cork) these will remain.

## **4. On-call social work service protocol.**

The on-call social work service will be provided subject to the EOHS On-call Social Work Protocol.

## **5. Designated Area Manager.**

The Agreement with Impact sets out the following:

“As set out in the original Task Force Report on the Establishment of the Child and Family Agency, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, the on-call social work service will be managed locally under the direction of designated Area Managers, with national coordination through the CIS. The triage service in CIS will be lead by the on-call team leader/principal grade social worker.

The on-call social work service will be delivered in alignment with other locally managed Tusla services. Geographical boundaries may change over time in line with changes which may occur with alignment of Tusla services to the newly defined federation structure of the 9 HSE Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) Any structural changes will require formal consultation with our trade union partners.

In the initial phase of establishment of the on-call social work service the country will be divided into 8 Contact points to ensure accessibility as follows:

1. Cavan/Monaghan/Louth/Meath.
2. Laois/Offaly/Longford/Westmeath.
3. Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary/Waterford/Wexford.
4. Kerry/Cork (west county and north county).
5. Clare/Limerick/North Tipperary.
6. Galway/Roscommon.
7. Mayo
8. Donegal/Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan.

A designated Area Manager will have responsibility for the operation of the on-call service in each Contact point. It is the responsibility of the Area Manager to ensure

- that there is in place a rota of staff for all shifts to provide an on-call social work service;
- that the National Call Centre has at all times an up to date staff rota with contact details for all staff on-call".

## **6. Shifts and rosters.**

“The on-call social work service is structured into 7 day and 2 weekend night shifts. In order to ensure staff welfare and to promote consistency of service provision it is recommended that each Contact point should have a minimum core group of 12 on-call social work staff who work a maximum of 1 shift per week, 3 weeks on and 1 week off. There should be at least 3 additional on-call staff designated to cover annual leave, sickness etc”.

Where initial roster selection is over-subscribed the following criteria will be taken into account – location, experience, skill set.

It is recommended that local staff rotation is maintained to ensure that no staff member is overburdened by excessive out of hours duties and that all interested staff have an opportunity to work in this service. Therefore staff will rotate on call duties on an annual basis.

## **7. On-call phone system.**

A phone system is being developed to go live with the EOHS.

## **8. Rest periods.**

In the accommodation of adequate compensatory rest periods following out of hours on call duties into the normal working week common sense arrangements will prevail which balance the exigencies of the service with organisational requirements while ensuring the correct weekly hours are worked and compensatory rest is strictly managed as per The Organisation of Working Time Act. Managers will ensure that staff involved in the service will not be overburdened or put under undue stress. The OWT Act requires an 11 hour compensatory rest period between shifts, therefore if a social worker finishes work at 1am they cannot attend work until 12pm later that day.

If the on-call social worker is required, following involvement in the invoking of Section 12, to attend at Court during the following day to make application for an emergency care order, account will be taken of Court attendance in the determination of rest time. Compensatory rest time must be taken within a week in these instances.

End.

**The Emergency Out of Hours Service Application Form**  
**is available [here](#).**