

## **Definition of a single occupancy special arrangement**

The decision to place a child or young person in a single occupancy placement away from their peer group is an extreme measure and should only be used in response to the assessed risk of the behaviour of a young person and as a response to an assessed need.

A single occupancy special arrangement is one where the registered proprietor(s) have applied to the registration committee to provide a service for a registered capacity of one young person in a residential centre with a full team of care staff. It is also if the centre has been specifically asked to reduce their registered capacity to one young person for the specific purpose of providing a service to one young person. Both should have a specified period of time which should be the shortest term possible.

A respite break for a young person in a specified location away from their identified placement for a period of up to two weeks following which they will return to their identified placement is not an arrangement that is considered to be a special arrangement. Rather, this is an arrangement that is agreed between centre and placing social work management as a temporary and short term measure in response to an identified risk.

Neither is a special arrangement a situation whereby the registered capacity of a centre is two or more young people but due to the nature of referrals or due to matching the suitability of referrals there is only one young person living in the centre at a particular time.

## **Decision to register a centre for the purpose of single occupancy special arrangement**

The registered proprietor must apply for registration or a change to their purpose and function as per the protocol of applying for registration, see [www.tusla/alternativecare](http://www.tusla/alternativecare)

The registered proprietor must have a written purpose and function which clearly identifies the manner in which care will be provided and for what duration. The purpose of centre, the model of care identified and the nature in which the care will be provided. It must be clearly in response to an assessed and identified need. It should be for the shortest possible time, and be used to complete a specific assessment or to implement a specific intervention for a young person in line with the young person's care plan.

A therapeutic intervention, if it is referred to in the statement of purpose and function of the single occupancy centre, must clearly be understood by all the stakeholders and must comply with what has been defined as *"an intentional interaction(s) or events(s) which is expected to contribute to a positive outcome for a child or young person, which is selected on the basis of his/her identified needs, and which is underpinned by an informed understanding of the potential impact and value of the interaction/event involved"*<sup>1</sup>

## **Staffing and management**

To be effective in the provision of a specific single occupancy centre registered for one young person requires the management and the care staff to be well informed, trained in the necessary skills, co-ordinated in their approach and to have clear understanding of the purpose and function of the centre. The staff must be well supported and supervised in their roles.

Management must have systems in place to review the effectiveness and outcome of the single occupancy placement in consultation with social workers, the young person themselves and their family as well as any professionals involved.

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Best Practice Guidelines for the use and Implementation of Therapeutic Interventions for Children and Young People in Out of Home Care November 2009<sup>1</sup> Therapeutic Intervention Definition Working Group 2008

If there are any changes to the staff or management structure during the delivery of the single occupancy arrangement, these should be notified to the relevant regional manager as soon as they are known to the proprietor/service manager.

### **Site specific requirements**

**Risk assessment:** A site specific risk assessment should be completed and provided as part of the registration application where one-off properties are being utilised.

The applicant must provide evidence that the property complies with relevant fire safety requirements where possible. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable measures to attend to fire safety and evacuation procedures.

**Storage of files:** The applicant must have appropriate facilities for storage of files onsite. These must be fire proof, secure and maintained in accordance with FOI requirements and GDPR. The applicant should also have appropriate secure storage facilities onsite for petty cash and other valuable items including car keys.

**Register:** Once the service is registered by the registration committee, the centre manager must create a register specific to the special arrangement. This register must contain all pertinent detail in accordance with the requirements of the national standards and a duplicate copy should be maintained by the Child and Family Agency in accordance with the 1995 Child Care Regulations.

**Child Safeguarding Statement:** the applicant must submit a site specific CSS with their application. This CSS will need to be reviewed by the registration committee to ensure compliance with the guidance provided by TUSLA (as the short term nature of the special arrangement will not permit the time needed by the CSSCU to review and approve this).

### **Items to be submitted for registration application:**

- Application form
- Personnel files (or copies thereof) of staff identified to work in the special arrangement
- Fire safety documentation
- Photos of property and premises
- CSS
- Site specific risk assessment
- Contact details for the social work team of the young person being placed

### **Registration process**

Once all of the relevant information has been received and reviewed by the relevant regional manager of ACIM, the application will be brought to registration committee for discussion and decision. Where the request is of an emergency nature and timeframes do not permit this to happen, **the application will be brought to the attention of the National Manager ACIM and Alternative Care for discussion and decision.**

Applicant and all relevant professionals will be formally notified of decision.

Where an application has been approved, the service will be entered onto the national register.

Where the emergency nature of a request does not permit a site visit and review of all required documentation supporting the application (review of personnel files, etc), Tusla operations will be informed that the special arrangement is deemed to be operating without registration until

such time as this can all be verified. A maximum 10 day working period will be applied in this instance.

The registered special arrangement will be discussed at registration committee every 2 weeks whilst it continues to be operational.