



Independent Chairperson Multi-Agency Special Care Committee (MASCC)

Overview

The Child and Family Agency (Tusla) invites applications from suitably qualified and experienced individuals for appointment as Independent Chairperson of the Multi-Agency Special Care Committee (MASCC).

This independent governance role involves chairing the national committee responsible for reviewing referrals and making recommendations regarding Special Care placements for children and young people in the care of Tusla.

Special Care represents the most restrictive intervention within the child protection and welfare system. It involves the civil detention of a child or young person under the Child Care Act 1991 for their own welfare and protection. As this represents a significant restriction of liberty, decisions relating to Special Care must be robust, evidence-based and compliant with legislation and children's rights.

The Independent Chairperson plays a key role in ensuring the fair, transparent and lawful operation of the MASCC.

About Special Care

Special Care forms part of the continuum of State care available to children and young people in Ireland. It provides a short-term stabilising intervention in a secure therapeutic environment for young people whose behaviour places them at significant risk.

Special Care placements are authorised through High Court Orders restricting a child or young person's liberty and are therefore used only in exceptional circumstances.

Special Care Units provide:

- Higher staffing ratios
- On-site education
- Access to clinical and therapeutic supports

The aim of Special Care is to stabilise and support the young person so they can safely transition to a less restrictive placement as soon as possible. There are currently three mixed-gender Special Care Units operating nationally.

The Multi-Agency Special Care Committee (MASCC)

The MASCC is the national forum responsible for reviewing referrals and making recommendations on whether a young person meets the statutory criteria for Special Care placement.

The Committee brings together senior representatives from multiple statutory agencies to ensure decisions are informed by multidisciplinary expertise and a shared understanding of the complex needs of young people referred for Special Care.

Membership includes:

- Independent Chairperson
- Tusla Area Managers / Principal Social Workers representing the six Tusla regions
- Children's Residential Services Director and Regional Area Manager
- Representative from An Garda Síochána
- Representative from Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)
- Representative from the Health Service Executive (HSE)
- ACTS representative (Assessment Consultation Therapy Service)

Participation of agencies is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Role of the Independent Chairperson

Key responsibilities include:

- Chairing all MASCC meetings
- Liaising with the MASCC Administrator in advance of meetings
- Reviewing referrals to ensure required information is provided
- Facilitating multidisciplinary discussion and decision-making
- Ensuring decisions are made in respect of each referral
- Ensuring decisions are properly documented
- Drafting and issuing Committee correspondence to referring Social Work teams
- Acting as a point of contact for queries regarding Committee decisions
- Supporting the coordination of emergency meetings where required
- Keeping the Assistant National Director informed of the functioning of the Committee
- Maintaining strict confidentiality regarding applications and deliberations

The Chairperson must also agree to the publication of their name, profession and affiliation on the Tusla Special Care Committee webpage and is expected to attend all scheduled Committee meetings.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must possess:

- A relevant third-level qualification (minimum QQI Level 8) in childcare, health, law, social care or a related discipline
- A minimum of five years' experience in a senior leadership or management role
- Experience and understanding of the risk profile and complex needs of children referred for

Special Care

- Knowledge of Tusla's statutory and regulatory responsibilities
- Knowledge of the Child Care Act 1991, particularly Section 23 relating to Special Care
- Understanding of the legal and governance considerations associated with Special Care placements

Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Experience chairing multi-agency committees or governance structures
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, HIQA standards and regulatory requirements
- Knowledge of Tusla Special Care policies and procedures
- Understanding of GDPR and data protection legislation
- Commitment to upholding children's constitutional and human rights
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Strong facilitation, negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Ability to lead multi-stakeholder groups where there may be conflicting views
- Strong organisational, writing and analytical skills
- Ability to ensure decisions are based on up-to-date practice, legislation and policy

Remuneration

Remuneration is €200 per hour, paid pro-rata for periods of less than a seven-hour working day.

The anticipated time commitment is approximately 21 working hours over a six-week rolling period.

Remuneration is subject to Public Sector One Person One Salary (OPOS) rules and applicable payroll taxes. The successful candidate will be required to be set up on the Tusla payroll system.

Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid in accordance with Tusla financial regulations and public sector travel policies.

Applicants should note that accepting the role may impact existing employment or pension arrangements, including potential pension abatement.

Application Process

Applicants are required to submit:

1. Curriculum Vitae including:

- Educational history (Educational Institution, Conferring Body, Course of Study, Qualification Achieved)
- Career history
- Relevant experience including any track record as a chairperson reviewing complex cases or applications

2. Statement of Suitability (Maximum 500 words)

Outlining the applicant's suitability for the role and relevant knowledge of the statutory and regulatory framework governing child care and Special Care in Ireland.

3. Names and contact details of two referees.

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted by email to:

Magdalena Basinska
National Recruitment Operations Manager, Interim
Child and Family Agency (Tusla)
Email: magdalena.basinska@tusla.ie

All applications must be received before 12 noon on the closing date.

Opening Date for Applications: 26th March 2026

Closing Date for Applications: 17th April 2026, 12 noon.

Interview Process

Shortlisting will be based on the eligibility criteria, experience and competencies outlined above.

Candidates shortlisted will be invited to attend an interview with an independent selection panel.

Informal Enquiries

For informal enquiries regarding this role please contact:

William O'Rourke
Assistant National Director – Alternative Care
Child and Family Agency (Tusla)

William.orourke@tusla.ie

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